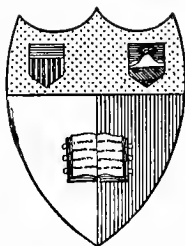


# CONNAUGHT TO CHICAGO

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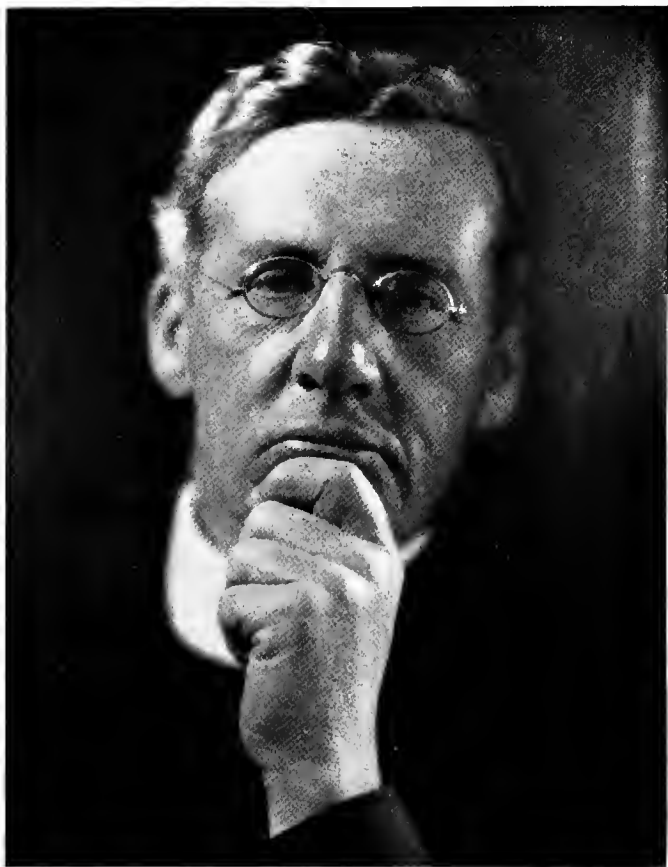


CONNAUGHT TO CHICAGO









*Photo*

*Pirie MacDonald*

“GEO. A. BIRMINGHAM”

(REV. CANON HANNAV)

# CONNAUGHT TO CHICAGO

BY

GEO. A. BIRMINGHAM *[pseud.]*

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIGHTER SIDE OF IRISH LIFE"

"SPANISH GOLD," ETC.

*Harvey, J. A. B.*

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# CONNAUGHT TO CHICAGO

## CHAPTER I

### THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

“FROM Connaught to Chicago.” You can take the phrase as the epitome of a tragedy, the long, slow, century and a half old tragedy of the flight of the Irish people from their own country, the flight of the younger men and women of our race from the land of their birth to the “Oilean Úr,” the new island of promise and hope across the Atlantic. Much might be written very feelingly about that exodus. The first part of it began in reality long ago, in the middle of the eighteenth century, when the farmers of north-east Ulster were making their struggle for conditions of life which were economically possible. When the land war of those days was being waged and the fighters on the one side were called “Hearts of Steel,” that war which resulted in the establishment of the once famous Ulster

Custom, hopeless men fled with their families from Belfast, from Derry, and from many smaller northern ports. They settled in America and avenged their wrongs in the course of the War of Independence. For the rest of Ireland the great exodus began later : not until the middle of the nineteenth century, when the famine of 1846 and the following years showed unmistakably that the social order of Connaught and Munster was impossible. It continued, that exodus, all through the years of the later land war. It is still going on, though the stream is feebler to-day. I could write a good deal about this exodus, could tell of forsaken cottages, of sorrowful departures, of broken hearts left behind. But it was not in the spirit of tragedy that we made our expedition to America, from Connaught to Chicago.

The phrase has another connotation. It carries with it a sense of adventuring. It was often, almost always, the bravest and most adventurous of our people who went. It was those who feared their fate too much who stayed at home. There is something fascinating in all the records of adventuring. We think of Vasco da Gama pushing his way along an unknown coast till he rounded the Cape



of Good Hope. We think of Columbus sailing after the setting sun, and our hearts are lifted up. Less daring, but surely hardly less romantic, were the goings forth of our Irish boys and girls. They went to seek sustenance, fortune, life at its fullest and freest in an unknown land in unguessed ways. I like to think of the hope and courage of those who went. They had songs—in the earlier days of the adventuring, one seldom hears them now—which express the spirit of their going. I remember taking a long drive, twenty years ago, through a summer night with a young farmer, who for the most part was tongue-tied and silent enough. But the twilight of that June evening moved him beyond his self-restraint, and he sang to me with immense emotion: “To the West! to the West! To the Land of the Free!” I was vaguely uncomfortable then, not understanding what was in his heart. I know a little better now. He was a man with a home, settled and safe, with a moderate comfort secured to him, but the spirit of adventuring was in his blood, and America represented to him in some vague way the Hy Brasil, the Isles of the Blest, which had long ago captivated the imagination of his ancestors.

Well, we went adventuring too ; but compared to theirs our adventure was very tame, very unworthy. Our ship was swift and safe, or nearly safe. It seemed hardly worth while to make our wills before we started. There were waiting for us on the other side friends who would guide our steps and guard us from—there were no dangers—all avoidable discomfort. We even had a friend, such is our astounding good fortune, who offered to go with us, and actually did meet us in New York. He had spent much time in America and was well accustomed to the ways of that country. We were dining in his company, I remember, in the familiar comfort of a London club, when the news that we were really to go to America first came to us.

“ I’d better go too,” he said, “ you’ll want some one to take care of you. I don’t think that either one or other of you is to be trusted to the American newspaper reporters without an experienced friend at your elbows.”

Next time we dined in our friend’s company it was in the restaurant of the Ritz Carlton in New York, and very glad we were to see him, though the newspaper reporter in America is by no means the dangerous wild beast he is supposed to be.

There was thus little enough of real adventuring about our journey to America. Yet to us it was a strange and wonderful thing. We felt as Charles Kingsley did when he wrote, "At Last," for a visit to America had long been a dream with us. There are other places in the world to which we wanted and still want to go. Egypt is one of them, for we desire to see the deserts where St. Antony fasted and prayed. The South Pacific Archipelago is another, for we are lovers of Stevenson, but for me, at least, the United States came first. I wanted to see them more than I wanted to see the Nitrian Desert or Samoa. It was not Niagara that laid hold of my imagination, or the Mississippi, though I did want to see it because of "Huckleberry Finn." What I desired most was to meet American people in their own native land, to see for myself what they had made of their continent, to understand, if I could, how they felt and thought, to hear what they talked about, to experience their way of living. I wanted to see Irish friends whom I had known as boys and girls. I had been intimate with many of them before they went out. I had seen them, changed almost beyond recognition, when they returned, on rare short visits to their

## 6 CONNAUGHT TO CHICAGO

homes. I wanted to know what they were doing out there, to see with my own eyes what it was which made new men and women of them. I wanted to know why some of them succeeded and grew rich, why others, not inferior according to our Irish judgment, came back beaten and disillusioned to settle down again into the old ways. Neither Egypt nor Samoa, not India, not Jerusalem itself, promised so much to me as America did.

There is besides a certain practical advantage, in our particular case, which America has over any other country to which we could travel. The Americans speak English. This is a small matter, no doubt, to good linguists, but we are both of us singularly stupid about foreign tongues. My French, for instance, is despicable. It is good enough for use in Italy. It serves all practical purposes in Spain and Portugal, but it is a very poor means of conveying my thoughts in France. For some reason the French people have great difficulty in understanding it, and their version of the language is almost incomprehensible to me, though I can carry on long conversations with people of any other nation when they speak French. It is the same with my Italian, my German, and my Portuguese.

They are none of them much good to me in the countries to which they are supposed to belong. This is a severe handicap when travelling. We both hate the feeling that we are mere tourists. We do not like to be confined to hotels with polyglot head waiters in them, or to be afraid to stir out of the channels buoyed out with Cook's interpreters. We see sights, indeed, visit picture galleries, cathedrals, gape at mountains and waterfalls ; but we never penetrate into the inside of the life of these foreign countries. We are never able to philosophise pleasantly about the way in which people live in them. The best we can do is to wander after nightfall along the side streets of cities, or to rub shoulders with the shopping crowd during the afternoon in Naples or Lisbon. America is foreign enough. It is as foreign as almost any European country, as foreign as any country in the world in which people wear ordinary clothes. I dare-say Algiers is more foreign. I am sure that Borneo must be. But New York is just as strange a place as Paris or Rome, and therefore just as interesting, with this advantage for us that we could understand, after a few days, every word that was spoken round us.

Indeed, this similarity of language was

something of a disappointment to us. We did not actually expect to hear people say "I guess" at the beginning of every sentence. We knew that was as impossible as the frequent "Begorras" with which we Irish are credited. But we had read several delightful American books, one called *Rules of the Game*, with particular attention, and we thought the American language would be more vigorously picturesque than it turned out to be. The American in books uses phrases and employs metaphors which are a continual joy. His conversation is a series of stimulating shocks. In real life he does not keep up to that level. He talks very much as an Englishman does. There are, indeed, ways of pronouncing certain words which are strange and very pleasant. I would give a good deal to be able to say "very" and "America" as these words are said across the Atlantic. "Vurry" does not represent the sound, nor does "Amurrica," but I have tried in vain to pick up that vowel. I suppose I am tone deaf. I either caricature it as "vurry" or relapse into the lean English version of the word. There are also some familiar words which are used in ways strange to me. "Through," for instance, is a word which I am thoroughly accustomed to, and

“cereal” is one which I often come across in books dealing with agriculture. But I was puzzled one morning when an attentive American parlour-maid, with her eye on my porridge plate, asked me whether I was “through with the cereal.” Solicitors on this side of the Atlantic are regarded as more or less respectable members of society. Some of their clients may consider them crafty, but no one would class them, as actors used to be classed, with vagabonds. It was, therefore, a surprise to me to read a notice on an office door: “Solicitors and beggars are forbidden to enter this building.” I made inquiries about what the solicitors had done to deserve this, and found that “solicitor,” in that part of America, perhaps all over America, means, not a kind of lawyer, but one who solicits subscriptions, either for some charity or for his own use and benefit.

There are other words: “baggage check,” for instance, which could not be familiar to us, because we have not got the thing to which they belong in the British Isles. And a highly picturesque, vigorous phrase meets one now and then. There was an occasion in which a laundry annoyed us very much. It did not bring back some clothes which had

gone to be washed. We complained to a pleasant and highly vital young lady who controlled all the telephones in our hotel. She took our side in the dispute at once, seized the nearest receiver, and promised to "lay out that laundry right now." We went up to our rooms comforted with the vision of a whole staff of washerwomen lying in rows like corpses, with napkins tied under their chins, and white sheets over them. Americans ought not to swear, and do, in fact, swear much less than English people in ordinary conversation. The Englishman, when things go wrong with him, is almost forced to say "damn" in order to express his feelings. His way of speaking his native language offers him no alternative. The American has at command a small battery of phrases far more helpful than any oath. It is no temptation to damn a laundry when you can "lay it out" by telephone.

I like the American use of the word "right" in such phrases as "right here," "right now," and "right away." When you are told, by telephone, as you are told almost everything in America, that your luggage will be sent up to your room in the hotel "right now," you are conscious of the friendliness of intention in the hall porter, which the English phrase



“at once” wholly fails to convey. Even if you have to wait several hours before you actually get the luggage, you know that every effort is being made to meet your wishes. You may, perhaps, have got into a bath and find yourself, for the want of clean clothes, forced to decide between staying there, going straight to bed, or getting back into the dirty garments in which you have travelled. But you have no business to complain. The “right now” ought to comfort you, especially when it is repeated cheerily, while you stand dripping and embarrassed at the receiver to make a final appeal. The word “right” in these phrases does not intensify, it modifies, the immediateness of the now. This is one of the things to which you must get accustomed in America. But it is a friendly phrase, offering and inviting brotherliness of the most desirable kind. That it means no more than the “Anon, sir, anon,” of Shakespeare’s tapster, is not the fault of anybody. Some sacrifices must be made for the sake of friendliness.

But taken as a whole the American language is very little different from English. I imagine the tendency to diverge has been checked by the growing frequency of intercourse between

the two countries. So many Americans come to England and so many English go to America that the languages are being reduced to one dead level. What used to be called "Americanisms" are current in common talk on this side of the Atlantic, and on the other there is a regrettable tendency to drop even the fine old forms which the English themselves lost long ago. "Gotten" still survives in America instead of the degraded "got," but I am afraid it is losing its hold. "Wheel" is in all ways preferable to bicycle, and may, perhaps, become naturalised here. I cannot imagine that the Americans will be so foolish as to give it up. Whether "an automobile ride" is preferable to a drive in a motor I do not know. They both strike me as vile phrases, and it is difficult to choose between them.

America, as a country to travel in, had for us another attraction besides its language. Some people have relations in Spain to whom they can go, and in whose houses they can stay as guests. Others have relatives of the same convenient kind in Austria and even in Russia. Many people have friends in France and Germany. We are not so fortunate. When we go to those countries we spend our time in hotels, or at best in pensions. We

do not discover intimate things about the people there. It is impossible for us to learn, except through books, and they seldom tell us the things we want to know, whether the Austrians are morose or cheerful at breakfast time, and whether the Germans when at home hate fresh air as bitterly as they hate it when travelling. And these are just the sort of things which it is most interesting to know about any people. The politics of a foreign country are more easily studied in the pages of periodicals like *The Nineteenth Century* than in the daily press of the country itself. Statistics about trade and population can be read up in books devoted to the purpose. All sorts of other information are supplied by the invaluable Baedeker, so that it is in no way necessary to go to Venice in order to find out things about St. Mark's. But very intimate details about the insides of houses, domestic manners, and so forth, can only be obtained by staying in private homes. This we thought we might accomplish in America, because we had some friends there before we started. In reality ready-made friends are unnecessary for the traveller in America. He makes them as he goes along, for the Americans are an amazingly sociable people and hospitable beyond all

other nations. To us Irish—and we are supposed to be hospitable—the stranger is a stranger until he is shown in some way to be a friend. In America he is regarded as a friend unless he makes himself objectionable, unless he makes himself very objectionable indeed. We heard of American hospitality before we started. We feel now as the Queen of Sheba felt after her visit to King Solomon, that the half was not told us. To be treated hospitably is always delightful. It is doubly so when the hospitality enables the fortunate guest to learn something of a kind of life which is not his own.

For all these reasons—I have enumerated four, I think—we desired greatly to go to America; and there was still another thing which attracted us. You cannot go to America except by sea. Even if you are seasick—and I occasionally am, a little—travelling in a steamer is greatly to be preferred to travelling in a train. A good steamer is clean; the best train covers you with smuts. The noise of the train is nerve-shattering. The noise which a steamer makes, even in a gale, is soothing. When a train stops and when it starts again it jerks and bumps. It also runs over things called points, and then it bumps

more. A steamer stops far seldomer than a train, and does so very gently and smoothly. It never actually bumps, and though it very often rolls or pitches, it does these things in a very dignified way with due deliberation. We chose a slow steamer for our voyage out, and if we are fortunate enough to go to America again we shall choose another slow steamer.

Having made up our minds to go—or rather, since these things are really decided for us and we are never the masters of our movements, having been shepherded by Destiny into a trip to America, we naturally sought for information about the country. We got a great deal more than we actually sought. Everyone we met gave us advice and told us what to expect. Advice is always contradictory, and the only wise thing to do is to take none of what is offered. But it puzzled us to find that the accounts we got of the country were equally contradictory. English people, using a curious phrase of which they seem to be very fond, prophesied for us “the time of our lives.” They said that we should enjoy ourselves from the day we landed in New York until the day when we sank exhausted by too much joy, a day which some of them placed a fortnight off, some three weeks, all of them underestimating,

as it turned out, our capacity for enduring delight. Americans, on the other hand, decried the country, and told us that the lot of the traveller in it was very far from being pleasant. This puzzled us. A very modest and retiring people might be expected to underestimate the attractions of their own land. We Irish, for instance, always assert that it rains three days out of every four in Ireland. But the Americans are not popularly supposed to be, and in fact are not, particularly modest. I can only suppose that the Americans we met before we started were in bad tempers, because they were for one reason or another obliged to stay in England, and that they belittled their country in the spirit of the fox who said the grapes were sour.

One piece of advice which we got gave us, incidentally and accidentally, our first glimpse at one of the peculiarities of the American people—their hatred of letter writing as a means of communication. The advice was this :

“Do not attempt to take a sealskin coat into America, because there is a law there against sealskin coats, and the Custom House officers will hold up the garment.”

This seemed to us very improbable. I re-

membered the song I have already quoted about the "Land of the Free," and could not bring myself to believe that a great nation, a nation that had fought an expensive war in order to set its slaves at liberty, could possibly want to interfere with the wearing apparel of a casual stranger. The Law which is very great and majestic everywhere is, according to the proverb, indifferent to very small matters. America, which is as great and majestic as any law, could not possibly be supposed to concern itself with the material of a woman's coat. So we reasoned. But the warning was given with authority by one who knew a lady who had tried to bring a sealskin coat into America and failed. We thought it well to make sure. An inquiry at the steamboat office was useless. The clerk there declined to say anything either good or bad about the American Custom House regulations. I have noticed this same kind of cautious reticence among all Americans when the subject of customs comes up. I imagine that the people of ancient Crete avoided speaking about that god of theirs who ate young girls and for the same reason. There is no use running risks, and the American Custom House officer is a person whom it is not

well to offend. This is the way with all democracies. In Russia and Germany a man has to be careful in speaking about the Czar or the Kaiser. In republics we shut our mouths when a minor official is mentioned, unless we are among tried and trusted friends. I myself dislike respecting anyone; but if respect is exacted of me I should rather yield it to a king with a proper crown on his head than to an ordinary man done up with brass buttons. However, Anglo-Saxons on both sides of the Atlantic seem to like doing obeisance to officials, and their tastes are no affairs of mine.

Having failed in the steamboat office, I wrote a letter to a high American official in England—not the Ambassador. I did not like to trouble him about a sealskin coat. An English official, high, or of middling station, would have answered me by return of post, because he is glad of an opportunity of writing a letter. In fact he likes writing letters so much that he would have sent me two answers, the first a brief but courteous acknowledgment of my letter, and an assurance that it was receiving attention; the second an extract from the Act of Parliament which dealt with my particular problem. The American



official does not like writing letters. No American does. Rather than write a letter an American will pursue you, *viva voce*, over hundreds of miles of telephone wire, or spend an hour of valuable time in having an interview with you in some more or less inaccessible place. Not even promotion to a high official position will cause an American to feel kindly towards a pen. The official to whom I wrote would, I am sure, have told me all there is to know about the American dislike of sealskin coats, if he could have got me on the telephone. He could not do that, because my name is not in the London telephone directory. He would, although he is a most important person and I am less than the least, have come to me and talked face to face if he had known where to find me; but I wrote from a club, and the chances were five to one at least against his finding me there. There was nothing for it but to write a letter, but it took him several days to make up his mind to the effort. His answer, when he did write it, followed me to New York, and the sealskin coat problem had solved itself then.

I noticed, when in New York, that it takes a posted letter much longer to get from one street in that city to another quite near at

hand, than it does in London for a letter posted in the same way to get from Denmark Hill to Hampstead. I connect this fact with the dislike for letter-writing which is prevalent among Americans. But I do not know which is cause and which is effect. It may be that the American avoids letters because he knows that they will go to their destination very slowly. It may be, on the other hand, that the American post office has dropped into leisurely ways because it knows that it is seldom used for business purposes. Love letters it carries, no doubt, for it is difficult to express tender feelings on a telephone, and impossible to telegraph them; but love letters are hardly ever urgent. The "Collins" or "Hospitable Roof" communication must be a letter, and must go through the post, but the writer and the recipient would both be better pleased if it never arrived at all. Business letters are different things, and I am sure the American post office carries comparatively few of them.

I wish that some one with a taste for statistics would make out a table of the weights of the mail bags carried on Cunard steamers. I am convinced, and nothing but statistics will make me think differently, that the westward

bound ships carry far more letters than those which travel eastward. All Englishmen, except, for obvious reasons, English journalists, write letters whenever they have a decent excuse. Americans only write letters when they must. It was, I think, the late Charles Stewart Parnell who observed that most letters answer themselves if you leave them alone long enough. This is profoundly true, although Englishmen do not believe it. I have tried and I know. Americans have either come across Parnell's remark or worked out the same truth for themselves. I applaud their wisdom, and I was once sorry that they practised this form of economy. If we had got an answer to our letter before we sailed we should have left the coat behind us. As it was we took the coat with us and carried it about America, giving ourselves indeed a good deal of trouble and reaping very little in the way of comfort or credit by having it. When we did get the letter it showed us that the Americans really do object strongly to these coats and have made a law against them. If we had known that before starting we should have left the coat behind us at any cost to our feelings.

We are not aggressive people, either of us,

and we always try to conform to the customs of the country in which we are, and to respect the feelings of the inhabitants. We cannot, indeed, afford to do anything else. Members of powerful, conquering nations go about the world insisting on having their own way wherever they are. The English, for instance, have spread the practice of drinking tea in the afternoon all over Europe. They make it understood that wherever they go afternoon tea must be obtainable. Other peoples shrug their shoulders and give in. The Americans have insisted that hotels shall be centrally heated, and all rooms and passages kept up to a very high temperature. No one else wants this kind of heat, and until the Americans took to travelling in large numbers we were all content with fire-places in rooms and chilly corridors. But the Americans are a great people, and there is hardly a first-rate hotel left in Europe now which has not got a system of central heating installed. The French have secured the use of their language, or a colourable imitation of their language, on all menu cards and bills of fare. No self-respecting *maitre d'hôtel*, even if 90 per cent. of his patrons are Americans, English, and Germans, would dare to call soup anything except *potage*

or *consommé*. I think we owe it to the Russians that ladies can now smoke cigarettes without reproach in all European restaurants, though they cannot do this yet in America, because very few Russians of the tourist classes go to America. It must be very gratifying to belong to one of these great nations and to be able to import a favourite custom or a valued comfort wherever you go. We are mere Irish. We have never conquered anyone ourselves, although we are rather good at winning other people's battles for them. We have not money enough to make it worth anybody's while to consider our tastes; nor indeed are we sure enough of ourselves to insist on having our own way. There is always at the back of our minds the paralysing thought that perhaps the other people may be right and we may be wrong. We submit rather than struggle.

We like, for instance, good tea at breakfast, strong dark brown tea, which leaves a distinct stain on the inside of the cup out of which we drink it. Nobody else in the world likes this kind of tea. If we were a conquering, domineering people, we should go about Europe and America saying: "This, which we drink, is tea. Your miserable concoction is slop or

worse." If we were rich enough, and if large numbers of us travelled, we should establish our kind of tea as an institution. It would be obtainable everywhere. At first it would be called "Thé à l'Irlandaise," and we should get it by asking for it. Afterwards it would be "thé" simply, and if a traveller wanted anything else he would have to ask for that by some special name. But we are not that kind of people. There are not enough of us, and the few there are have not sufficient money to make them worth considering. Besides, as I say, we are never self-confident enough to assert that our kind of tea is the true and superior kind. We are uneasily conscious that it is rude to describe other people's favourite beverages as "slop" even when they call ours "poison." And there is always the doubt whether we may not be wrong after all. Great peoples do not suffer from this doubt. The American is perfectly certain that houses ought to be centrally heated. To him there does not seem to be any possibility of arguing about that. He has discovered a universal truth, and the rest of the world must learn it from him. The German is equally sure that fresh air in a railway carriage brings death to the person who breathes it. He is as certain

about that as he is that water wets him when it is poured over him. There is no room for discussion. But we Irish are differently constituted. When anyone tells us that our type of tea reduces those who drink it to the condition of nervous wrecks, and ultimately drives them into lunatic asylums, we wonder whether perhaps he may not be right. It is true that we have drunk the stuff for years and felt no bad effects ; but there is always "the plaguy hundredth chance" that the bad effects may have been there all the time without our noticing them, and that, though we seem sane, we may be gibbering imbeciles. Thus it is that we never have the heart to make any real struggle for strong tea.

This same infirmity would have prevented our dragging that coat into America, if we had found out in time that sealskin coats strike Americans as wicked things. To us it seems plain that seals exist mainly for the purpose of supplying men, and especially women, with skins ; just as fathers have their place among created things in order to supply money for the use of their children, or steam in order that it may make engines work. Left to ourselves, we should accept all these as final truths and live in the light of them. But the moment

anyone assails them with a flat contradiction we begin to doubt. The American says that the seal, at all events the seal that has the luck to live in Hudson Bay, ought not to be deprived of his skin, and that men and women must be content with their own skins, supplemented when necessary by the fleeces of sheep.

The Englishman or the German would stand up to the American.

"I will," one of them would say, "kill a Hudson Bay seal if I like, or have him killed for me by some one else. I will wear his skin unless you prevent me by actual force, and I will resist your force as long as I can."

We do not adopt that attitude. We cannot, for the spirit of defiance is not in us. When we were assured, as we were in the end, that the American really has strong feelings about seals, we began to think that he might be right.

"America," so we argued, "is a much larger country than Ireland. It is much richer. The buildings in its cities are far higher. Who are we that we should set up our opinions about tea or skins or anything else against the settled convictions of so great a people?"



Therefore, though we brought our coat into America we did so in no spirit of defiance. Once we found out the truth, we concealed the coat as much as possible, carrying it about folded up so that only the lining showed. It was hardly ever worn; only twice, I think, the whole time we were there. The weather, indeed, was as a rule particularly warm for that season of the year.

## CHAPTER II

### PRESSMEN AND POLITICIANS

OUR ship, after a prosperous and pleasant voyage, steamed up the Hudson River in a blinding downpour of rain which drove steadily across the decks. Our clothes had been packed up since very early in the morning, and we declined to get soaked to the skin when there was no chance of our being able to get dry again for several hours. Therefore we missed seeing the statue of Liberty and the Woolworth Buildings. We were cowards, and we suffered for our cowardice by losing what little respect our American fellow-travellers may have had for us. They went out in the rain to gaze at the statue of Liberty and the Woolworth Buildings. We saw nothing through the cabin windows except an advertisement of Colgate's toothpaste. The Woolworth Buildings we did, indeed, see later on. The statue of Liberty we never saw at all. I could of course write eloquently about it

without having seen it. Many people do things of this kind, but I desire to be perfectly honest. I leave out the statue of Liberty. I am perfectly sure it is there; but beyond that fact I know nothing whatever about it.

We actually landed, set foot at last on the soil of the new world a little after 8 A.M., which is a detestable hour of the day under any circumstances, and particularly abominable in a downpour of rain. If a stranger with whom I was very slightly acquainted were to land at that hour in Dublin, and if it were raining as hard there as it did that morning in New York—it never does, but it is conceivable that it might—I should no more think of going to meet him at the quay than I should think of swimming out a mile or two to wave my hand at his ship as she passed. A year ago I should have made this confession without the smallest shame. It would not have occurred to me as possible that I should make such an expedition. If a very honoured guest arrived at a reasonable hour and at an accessible place—steamboat quays are never accessible anywhere in the world—if the day were fine and I had nothing particular to do, I might perhaps go to meet that guest, and I should expect him to be surprised and

gratified. I now confess this with shame, and I intend to reform my habits. I blush hotly when I think of the feelings of the Americans who come to visit us. They behave very much better than we do to strangers. There were three people to meet us that morning when we landed, and two others arrived at the quay almost immediately afterwards. Of the five there was only one whom I had ever seen before, and him no oftener than twice. Yet they were there to shake hands in warm welcome, to help us in every conceivable way, to whisper advice when advice seemed necessary.

There were also newspaper reporters—interviewers—and we had our first experience of that business as the Americans do it, in the shed where our baggage was examined by Custom House officers.

“Don’t,” said one of my friends, “say more than you can help about religion.”

The warning seemed to me unnecessary. I value my religion, not so much as I ought to, but highly. Still it is not a subject which I should voluntarily discuss at eight o’clock in the morning in a shed with rain splashing on the roof. The very last thing I should dream of offering a newspaper reporter is a formal

proof of any of the articles of the Apostles' creed. Nor would any interviewer whom I ever met care to listen to a sermon. I was on the point of resenting the advice; but I reflected in time that it was certainly meant for my good, and that the ways of the American interviewer were strange to me. He might want to find out whether I could say my catechism. I thanked my friend and promised to mention religion as little as possible. I confess that the warning made me nervous.

"What," I whispered, "are they likely to ask me?"

"Well; what you think of America, for one thing. They always begin with that."

I had been told that before I left home. I had even been advised by an experienced traveller to jot down, during the voyage out, all the things I thought about America, and have them ready on slips of paper to hand to the interviewers when I arrived. This plan, I was assured, would save me trouble and would give the Americans a high opinion of my business ability. I took the advice. I had quite a number of excellent remarks about America ready in my pocket when I landed. They were no use to me. Not one single interviewer asked me that question. Not even the one

who chatted with me in the evening of the day on which I left for home. I do not know why I was not asked this question. Every other stranger who goes to America is asked it, or at all events says he is asked it. Perhaps the Americans have ceased to care what any stranger thinks about them. Perhaps they were uninterested only in my opinion. I can understand that.

Nor was I tempted or goaded to talk about religion. The warning which I got to avoid that subject was wasted. No one seemed to care what I believed. I do not think I should have startled the very youngest interviewer if I had confided to him that I believed nothing at all. The nearest I ever got to religion in an interview was when I was asked what I thought about Ulster and Home Rule. That I was asked frequently, almost as frequently as I was asked what I thought of Synge's *Play-boy of the Western World*; and both these seemed to me just the sort of questions I ought to be asked, if indeed I ought to be asked any questions at all. I do not, indeed cannot, think about Ulster and Home Rule. Nobody can. It is one of those things, like the fourth dimension, which baffle human thought. Just as you hope that you have got it into a think-

able shape it eludes you, and you see it sneering at your discomfiture from the far side of the last ditch. But it was quite right and proper to expect that an Irishman, especially an Irishman who came originally from Belfast, would have something to say about it, some thought to express which would illuminate the morass of that controversy. I could not complain about being asked that question. I ought to have had something to say about Synge's play too, but I had not. I think it is a wonderful play, by far the greatest piece of dramatic literature that Ireland has produced ; but I cannot give any reasons for the faith that is in me. Therefore, I am afraid I must have been a most unsatisfactory subject for the interviewers. They cannot possibly have liked me.

I, on the other hand, liked them very much indeed. I found them delightful to talk to, and look back on the hours I spent with them as some of the most interesting of my whole American trip. They all, without exception, seemed to want to be pleasant. They were the least conceited set of people I ever came across, and generally apologised for coming to see me. The apologies were entirely unnecessary. Their visits were favours conferred on

me. They were strictly honourable. When, as very often happened, I said something particularly foolish and became conscious of the fact, I used to ask the interviewer to whom I had said it not to put it in print. He always promised to suppress it, and he always kept his promise, though my sillinesses must often have offered attractive copy. Nor did any interviewer ever misrepresent me, except when he failed to understand what I said, and that must always have been more my fault than his. At first I used to be very cautious with interviewers, and made no statements of any kind without hedging. I used to shy at topics which seemed dangerous, and trot away as quickly as I could to something which offered opportunity for platitudes. I gradually came to realise that this caution was unnecessary. I would talk confidently now to an American interviewer on any subject, even religion, for I know he would not print anything which I thought likely to get me into trouble.

I cannot understand how it is that the American interviewers have such a bad reputation on this side of the Atlantic. They are a highly intelligent, well-educated body of men and women engaged in the particularly difficult job of trying to get stupid people, like



me, or conceited people, to say something interesting. They never made any attempt to pry into my private affairs. They never asked obviously silly questions. I have heard of people who resorted to desperate expedients to avoid interviewers in America. I should as soon think of trying to avoid a good play or any other agreeable form of entertainment. After all there is no entertainment so pleasant as conversation with a clever man or woman. I have heard of people who were deliberately rude to interviewers and gloried in their rudeness afterwards. That seems to me just as grave a breach of manners as to say insolent things to a host or hostess at a dinner party.

Every now and then an interviewer, using a very slender foundation of fact, produces something which is brilliantly amusing. There was one, with whom I never came into personal contact at all, who published a version of a conversation between Miss Maire O'Neill and me. What we actually said to each other was dull enough. The interviewer, by the simple expedient of making us talk after the fashion which "Mr. Dooley" has made popular, represented us as exceedingly interesting and amusing people. No one but a fool would resent being flattered after this fashion.

The one thing which puzzles me about the business is why the public wants it done. It is pleasant enough for the hero of the occasion, and it is only affectation to call him a victim. The man who does the work, the interviewer, is, I suppose, paid. He ought to be paid very highly. But where does the public come in ? It reads the interview—we must, I think, take it for granted that somebody reads interviews—but it is very difficult to imagine why. The American public, judging from the number of interviews published, seems particularly fond of this kind of reading. Yet, however clever the interviewer, the thing must be dull in nine cases out of ten.

My first interviewer, my very first, photographed me. I told him that he was wasting a plate, but he went on and wasted three. Why did he do it ? If I were a very beautiful woman I could understand it, though I think it would be a mistake to photograph Venus herself on the gangway of a steamer at eight o'clock in the morning in a downpour of rain. If I had been a Christian missionary who had been tortured by Chinese I could understand it. Tortures might have left surprising marks on my face or twisted my spine in an interesting way. If I had been an apostle of physical

culture, dressed in a pair of bathing drawers and part of a tiger skin, the photographing would have been intelligible. But I am none of these things. What pleasure could the public be expected to find in the reproduction of a picture of a commonplace middle-aged man. Yet the thing was done. I can only suppose that reading interviews and looking at the attendant photographs has become a habit with the American public, just as carrying a walking stick has with the English gentleman. A walking stick is no real use except to a lame man. The walker does not push himself along with it. He does not, when he sets out from home, expect to meet anyone whom he wants to hit. It cannot be contended that the stick is ornamental or adds in any way to the beauty of his appearance. He carries it because he always does carry it and would feel strange if he did not. The Americans put up with interviews in their papers for the same sort of reason. After all no one, least of all the subject, has any right to complain.

Those were our two first impressions of America, that it was a country of boundless hospitality and a country pervaded by agreeable newspaper men. I am told by those who make a study of such things that the first

glance you get at a face tells you something true and reliable about the man or woman it belongs to, but that you get no further information by looking at the face day after day for months. When you come to know the man or woman really well and have studied his actions and watched his private life closely for years, you find, if you still recollect what it was, that your first impression was right. I knew an Englishman once who lived for ten years in Ireland and was deeply interested in our affairs. He told me that when he had been a week in the country he understood it, understood us and all belonging to us thoroughly. At the end of three months he began to doubt whether he understood us quite as well as he thought. After five years he was sure he did not understand us at all. After ten years—he was a persevering man—he began to understand us a little, and was inclined to think he was getting back to the exact position he held at the end of the first week. Ten years hence, if he and I live so long, I intend to ask him again what he thinks about Ireland. Then, I expect, he will tell me that he is quite convinced that his earliest impressions were correct. This is my justification for recording my first impressions of America. I hope to

get to know the country much better as years go on. I shall probably pass through the stage of laughing at my earliest ideas, but in the end I confidently expect to get back to my joyous admiration for American hospitality and my warm affection for American journalists.

Almost immediately—certainly before the end of our second day—we arrived at the conclusion that New York is a singularly clean city. We are, both of us, by inclination dwellers in country places. The noise of great towns worries us. The sense of being closely surrounded by large numbers of other people annoys us. But we should, no doubt, get used to these things if we were forced to dwell long in any city. I am, however, certain that I should always loathe the dirt of cities. The dirt of the country, good red mud, or the slime of wet stems of trees, does not trouble me, even if I am covered with it. I enjoy the dirt of quiet harbours, fish scales, dabs of tar and rust off old anchor chains. I am happier when these things are clinging to me than when I am free of them. I am no fanatical worshipper of cleanliness. I do not rank it, as the English proverb does, among the minor divinities of the world. But I do not like, I

thoroughly detest, the dirt of the cities, that impalpable grime which settles down visibly on face, hands, collar, cuffs, and invisibly, but sensibly, on coats, hats, and trousers. New York, of all the cities that ever I have been in, is freest of this grime. You can open your bedroom window at night in New York, and the pocket handkerchief you leave on your dressing table will still be white in the morning, fairly white. You can walk about New York all day and your nose will not be covered with smuts in the evening. I am told that the cleanness of New York is partly due to the fact that trains running in and out of the city are forced by the municipal authorities to use electricity as a motive power and are forbidden to burn coal till they get into the country. I am told that only a hard, comparatively smokeless coal may be burned by anyone in the city. If these things are true, then the City Fathers of New York ought to be held up as a pattern to Town Councillors and Corporations all over the world.

As a matter of fact—such is the injustice of man—the municipal government of New York is not very greatly admired by the rest of the world. It is supposed to be singularly corrupt, and my fellow-countrymen are blamed

for its corruptness. When an European city feels in a pharisaical mood, it says : " Thank God I am not as other cities are, even as this New York." European cities may be morally cleaner. I do not know whether they are or not. They are certainly physically much dirtier. And from the point of view of the ordinary citizen, physical dirt is more continuously annoying than the moral kind. If I lived in a community whose rulers openly sold contracts and offices, I should break out into a violent rage once a year or so, and swear that I would no longer pay taxes for the benefit of minor politicians and their henchmen. All the rest of the year I should be placid enough, for I should forget the corruption if I escaped the perpetual unpleasantness of dirt, city dirt. No government, after all, is honest. The most that can be expected from men placed in authority is that they should not outrage public opinion by flaunting their dishonesty. But I cannot help feeling that men in authority, whom, after all, the rest of us pay, should do their business, and part of their business is to keep smuts away from our faces. If it is really true that we Irish govern New York, then men ought to give up speaking of us as " the dirty Irish." Dirty ! It appears that we are the

only people who have ever kept a city clean. I wish we could do it at home.

This Irish political corruption in New York is a very interesting thing, and I tried hard to arrive at some understanding of it. Tammany was defeated while we were in New York, and Mr. Mitchell became Mayor, promising a clean, morally clean, administration. He also is of Irish descent, so that there were countrymen of ours on both sides in the struggle, and we are, evidently, not all of us lovers of corruption. The scene in Broadway when the defeat of Tammany was announced surpassed anything I have ever beheld in the way of a demonstration of popular rejoicing, except perhaps "Mafeking Night" in London. Huge crowds paraded the streets. Youths with horns marched in procession making music like that of Edouard Strauss, but even louder. Hawkers did an immense trade in small gongs with balls attached to them, which made a noise like cymbals. Grave-looking men wore on their heads huge plumes of cut, crinkled paper, like the paper with which some people hide fireplaces in summer-time. Others had notices on their hats which declared "We told you so"—notices printed beforehand, and equally applicable to a victory of the other



side. Sky signs and lights of all sorts blazed above our heads. Newspaper offices flashed election figures on screens in front of their windows. Now and then an explosion rose clear above the din, and we knew that some enterprising photographer was making a flash-light picture of the scene.

There was no question about the fact that New York was pleased with itself. The demonstration of popular delight would have followed very appropriately the capture of a Bastille, some stronghold of an ancient tyranny which held people down against their will. The supporters of Tammany rule were, of course, not in Broadway that night. They may have been sitting at home behind drawn blinds meditating on the fickleness of men, or perhaps on the ingratitude of democracies. Tammany was corrupt, no doubt, but the water supply of New York is very good, and it was no easy matter to get water there. Also the city is strikingly clean. But there was no question about the general disgust with Tammany rule. No man whom I talked to before or after the election had a good word to say for the organisation. Only, if I were suspected of glorying in their shame, patriotic Americans used occasionally to remind me of Marconi

scandals at home and the English sale of patents of nobility. And this was no real defence of Tammany. But I was not glorying, and Heaven forbid that I should ever hold up European political methods as a model to anyone. All I wanted was to understand. I was eagerly curious to know how Tammany came to be, whence its power came. It did not satisfy me to be told that Tammany bribed people and sold offices and therefore was powerful. That is like saying that Mohammed spread his religion by force of arms. I am sure that Tammany did bribe and I am sure that Mohammedans did ultimately conquer and put pressure on the conquered to accept the Koran. But before you can conquer you must have soldiers, soldiers who believe of their own free will. Before you can bribe you must have money to bribe with. Before you can sell offices you must have offices to sell. How did Tammany get itself into the position of being able to bribe ?

I was always asking these questions and always failing to get satisfactory answers to them. In the end, when I had almost given up hope, I did get a little light of the sort I wanted. It was after dinner one night at a private house in New York. The ladies had

left the room, and there were five men sitting round the table. Four of them were clever and distinguished men, and they might have talked very satisfactorily about things which interested them. But with that thoughtful courtesy which is one of the charms of American hospitality, they allowed the fifth man, the stranger in their midst, to guide the conversation. I asked one of my usual questions about Tammany. For a time I got nothing but the familiar stories of Tammany corruption given with more than the usual detail. We had names and dates put to scandalous achievements, and learned who had been allowed a "rake off" on this or that financial transaction. I heard about the alliance, under the banner of Tammany, between the Irish and the Jews. I reflected that other things besides misfortune make strange bedfellows. Then came the illumination. One of the men present leaned back in his chair and laid down his cigar.

"A Tammany ward boss," he said, "has the confidence of the people in his ward. If he had not he would not be a ward boss."

I did not want to interrupt by asking questions, and felt that I could guess sufficiently nearly the functions and business of a "ward boss" to do without an explanation.

“He wouldn’t,” said my friend, “win or keep the confidence of the people unless he deserved it more or less, unless he deserved it a good deal, unless he really was a friend to the people. He may not be a man of much ability. He generally isn’t, but he has a good heart.”

This was startling. My preconceived idea of a Tammany boss of any kind was of a man of considerable ability and a bad heart. I suppose I looked surprised. The speaker qualified his statement a little.

“A good heart, to start with. Everyone in the ward who is in any kind of difficulty or trouble goes to the boss. Most of them are poor ignorant people, and don’t know how to manage things for themselves. There’s a sick child who ought to be got into hospital. The ward boss sees about it. There’s a boy who ought to be in a situation. The ward boss gets a situation for him. There’s a man who has been badly treated by his employer—Oh! you know the sort of things which turn up. They’re the same with poor people all the world over.”

I did know, very well. I was also beginning to understand.

“Then, I suppose,” I said, “the people vote the way the ward boss tells them.”

"Naturally."

Well, yes, naturally. What do political rights and wrongs matter to them?

"After a while," my informant went on, "if he manages well, he is let a little bit into the inner ring. He gets a bit of money dropped to him here and another bit there. That makes a difference to him. He begins to do himself pretty well, and he likes it."

Most men do. These "bits of money," however they come, bring very pleasant things with them. That is the same everywhere.

"After a while—I don't say this is exactly what happens every time, but it's something like this. After a while he goes uptown and dines at one of the swagger restaurants, just to see what it's like. He is a bit out of it at first, but he goes again. He sees people there and he picks up their names. They are people with very impressive names, names he's been hearing all his life, and associating with millions and automobiles and diamonds. It gives him rather a pleasant feeling to find himself sitting at the next table and hearing the voices of these men; seeing the women with their jewels, and smelling the scent off their clothes. You know the sort of thing."

I could guess. I have, in my time, dined at

restaurants of the kind, though not often enough to get to know the looks of their native millionaires.

“Then some night or other one of these men steps across to our man’s table and talks to him. He’s as friendly as the devil. He introduces him to one or two others, or perhaps to some women ; but women don’t come much into business over here. Well, the poor fellow is a little bit above himself, and no wonder. He’s never been anything before but just a ‘Mick,’ and never expected to be anything else.”

Here I had to interrupt.

“A Mick ? ” I said.

“An Irishman. That’s what we generally call Irishmen.”

They call us “Pat ” on this side of the Atlantic, and I think I prefer it, but I have no particular quarrel with “Mick.” Both names are conveniently short.

“There’s nothing more than friendliness at first. Then, perhaps a week later, there’s something said about a contract or a new loan that is to be floated. Influence, a word in the right quarter, comes in useful in these cases. Our man, the man we’re talking of, doesn’t know very clearly what the talk is

about. He doesn't know that he has any influence; but it rather pleases him to feel that the other men think he has. There is a hint dropped about a subscription to the party funds and—well, that's how it's done."

I grasped at ideas which flitted past me. There always are "party funds." Politics cannot go on without them. There always are desirable things, whether contracts, rakes off, appointments, or—as in our monarch-ridden states—titles. But I wonder where the blame for the corruption really lies, the heavy part of the blame. Tammany Mick had a good heart to start with, and he was not a man of much ability.

However, these are only the speculations of an inquisitive man. They do not matter. New York smashed Tammany last autumn, and no doubt will keep it smashed. But a mere alliance of anti-Tammany forces will not permanently get the better of a well-constructed machine, nor is the enthusiasm for clean government good in a long distance race. An American poet has noted as one of the characteristics of truth, that though slain it will rise again, and of error that when vanquished it dies among its worshippers. In politics it is the machine which possesses

truth's valuable power of recuperation and idealism which gets counted out after a knock-down blow. It seems as if a machine will only go under finally in competition with another more efficient machine, and the new more efficient machine is just as great a danger to political morality as the old one was. This is the vicious circle in which democracies go round and round. Perhaps the truth is that politics, like art, are non-moral by nature, that politicians have nothing to do with right or wrong, truth or falsehood, honesty or dishonesty.



## CHAPTER III

### THE "HUSTLING" LEGEND

I WALKED through New York late at night shortly after I landed, and had for companions an Englishman, who knew the city well, and an American. The roar of the traffic had ceased. The streets were almost deserted. Along Fifth Avenue a few motors rushed swiftly bearing belated revellers to their homes. Save for them the city was as nearly silent as any city ever is. We talked. It was the Englishman who spoke first.

"New York and the sound of blasting go together," he said. "They are inseparably connected in my mind. New York is built on rock out of material blasted off rock with dynamite. This fact explains New York. It is the characteristic thing about New York. No other city owes its existence in the same way to the force of explosives shattering rock."

"New York," said the American, "is one of the soldiers of Attila the Hun."

The night was warm. He unbuttoned his overcoat as he spoke and flung it back from his chest. He squared his shoulders, looked up at the immensely lofty buildings on each side of us, looked round at the shadow-patched pavements, fixed his eyes finally on the lamps of a motor which was racing towards us from a great distance along the endless avenue. Then he pursued his comparison.

"Attila's soldier," he said, "went through some Roman city with his club over his shoulder. There were round him evidences of old civilisations which puzzled him. He gazed at the temples, the baths, the theatres with wondering curiosity; but he was conscious that he could smash everything and kill everyone he saw. He was the barbarian, but he was also the strong man. New York is like that among the cities of the world."

I contributed a borrowed comment on America.

"An Irishman once told me," I said, "that America isn't a country. It's a great space in which there are the makings of a country lying about. He might have said the same sort of thing about New York. There are the makings of a city scattered around."

"Chunks of blasted rock," said the Englishman.

"The Hun had a lot to learn," said the American, "but he was the strong man. He could smash and crush. Nobody else could."

There is a very interesting story or sketch—I do not know how it ought to be described—by the late "O. Henry," which he called *The Voice of the City*. He imagines that certain American cities speak, and each of them utters its characteristic word. Chicago says, "I will." Philadelphia says, "I ought." New Orleans says, "I used to." If I had "O. Henry's" genius I should try to concentrate into phrases the voices of the cities I know. I should like to be able to hear distinctly what they all say about themselves. Belfast, I am convinced, says "I won't." Dublin occasionally murmurs, "It doesn't really matter." So far I seem to get, but then I am puzzled. I should like to hear what Edinburgh says, what Paris says, what Rome would say if something waked her out of her dream. I should be beaten by London, even if I had all his genius, just as "O. Henry" was beaten by New York. He failed to disentangle the *motif* from the clamorous tumult of mighty

chords with which that city assails the ear. There is a supreme moment which comes in the Waldstein Sonata. The listener is a-quiver with maddening expectation. He is wrought upon with sound until he feels that he must tear some soft thing with his teeth. Then at the moment when the passion in him becomes intolerable the great scrap of melody thunders triumphantly over the confusion, and it is possible to breathe again. This is just what does not happen in the case of places like London and New York. A Beethoven yet unborn will catch their melodies for us some day, and the sonata of great cities will be written. Till he comes it is better to leave the thing alone. Neither blasting nor dynamite is the keyword. Attila's Hun with his club fails us, though he helps a little. And there is more, a great deal more, about New York than the confused massing of materials on the site of what is to be a temple or a railway station.

When I was in New York they were building a large edifice of some kind in Broadway, not far from Thirty-fifth Street. I used to see the work in progress every day, and often stopped to watch the builders for a while. Whenever I think of New York I shall remember the

shrill scream of the steam drill which made holes in the steel girders. The essential thing about that noise was its suggestion of relentlessness. Perhaps New York is of all cities the most relentless. The steel suffers and shrieks through a long chromatic scale of agony. New York drills a hole, pauses to readjust its terrible force, and then drills again.

That is one aspect of New York. The stranger cannot fail to be conscious of it. It is brought home to him by the rush of the overhead railway in Fourth Avenue, by the hurry of the crowds in Broadway, by the grinding clamour of the subway trains. It is this, no doubt, which has given rise to the theory that New York is a city of hustle. It seems to me a very cruel thing to say of any people that they hustle. The word suggests a disagreeable kind of spurious activity. The hustler is not likely to be efficient. He makes a fine show of doing things ; but he does not, somehow, get much done. The hustler is like a football player who is in all parts of the field at different times, sometimes in the forward line, sometimes among the backs, always breathless, generally very much in the way, and contributing less than anyone else to the winning of the game for his side. If New

York were a city of hustlers New York would drill no holes in steel girders.

The fact is, that America has, in this matter of hustle, been grossly slandered in Europe. I am not sure that the Americans, with a curious perversity, have not slandered themselves, and done as much as anyone to keep the hustle myth alive. The American understands the value of not hurrying as well as anyone in the world. He has, justly, a high opinion of himself, and declines to be a slave to a wretched machine like a clock. I realised this leisureliness the first time I went into a restaurant to get something to eat. I could have smoked a cigarette comfortably between the ordering and the getting of what I ordered. I could have smoked other cigarettes, calmly, as cigarettes ought to be smoked, between each course. American men do actually smoke in this way during meals, and I trace the custom not to an excessive fondness for tobacco, but to the leisurely way in which the business of eating is gone about. And it is not in restaurants only that this quiet disregard of time's abominable habit of going on is evident. The New York business man gets through his work—it is evident that he does get through it—without feeling it necessary to give every-

one the impression that each half-hour of the day is dedicated to a separate affair, and that the entire time-table will be reduced to chaos if a single minute strays out of its proper compartment into the next.

Perhaps it is because I am Irish that I like this way of doing business. There is a character in one of the late Canon Sheehan's novels, who says that there are two things which are plenty in Ireland—water and time. There are, undoubtedly, places in the world where water is scarce, the Sahara desert, for instance ; but I suspect that time is quite abundant everywhere, though some people affect to believe that it is not. I know English business men who scowl at you if you venture, having settled the little affair which brought you to their office, to make a pleasant remark about the chances of a general election before Christmas. They pretend that they have not time to talk about General Elections. They do this as Bob Sawyer used to have himself summoned from Church, in order to keep up their reputation. They want you to think that they are overwhelmed with pressing things. I have always suspected that, having got rid of their visitor, they spend hours reading about general elections in the daily papers. The

American business man is, apparently, never too busy to enjoy a chat. He invites you to lunch with him when you go to his office. He shows you the points of interest in the neighbourhood after luncheon. He discusses the present condition of Ireland, a subject which demands an immense quantity of time. He settles the little matter which brought you to his office with three sentences and a wave of the hand. He does not write you a letter afterwards beginning: "In confirmation of our conversation to-day I note that you are prepared to——" It is, I suppose, a man's temperament which settles which way of doing business he prefers. It is also, very largely, a question of temper. In my normal mood I prefer the American method. There is a broad humanity about it which appeals to me strongly. But if I have been annoyed by anything early in the day, broken a bootlace, for instance, or lost a collar stud, I would rather do business in the English way. In the one case I like to come in contact with a fellow-man, to feel that he has affections and weaknesses like my own. It is pleasant to get to know him personally. In the other case, thanks to the misfortunes of the morning, I am filled with a gloomy hatred of my kind.



I want, until the mood has worn off, to see as little as possible of anyone, and to keep inevitable people at arm's length. It is much easier to do this when the inevitable people also want to keep me at arm's length, and the English business man generally does. The friendliness of the American business man is a little trying sometimes to anyone in a bad temper. Sometimes, not always. I remember one occasion on which I was exceptionally cross. I forget what had happened to me in the morning, but it was worse than breaking a bootlace. It may have had something to do with telephones, instruments which generally drive me to fury. At all events, though in a bad temper, I had to go to see a man in his office. He was a man of extraordinarily friendly spirit, even for an American. I dreaded my interview, fearing that I might say something actually rude before it was over. Nothing could have been more soothing than my reception. This wonderful man cast a single quick glance at me as I entered his office. He realised my condition, and got through with the wretched necessity which had brought me there with a rapidity and precision which would have done credit to any Englishman. Then he ushered me out again

without making or giving me time to make a single remark of a miscellaneous kind. I apologised to him afterwards. He patted me reassuringly on the shoulder.

"That's all right," he said, "I saw the minute you came into the room that you were a bit rattled."

That seems to me a splendid example of tact. I do not suggest that all American business men have this faculty for swift, self-sacrificing sympathy. It must be rare, even in New York. Does it exist at all in England? If I called on an English merchant some morning when the spring was in my blood, and I felt that I wanted to leap and spring like a lamb, would he divine my mood, join hands and dance with me on his hearthrug? I doubt it. He would not do it even if I were a hundred times more important than I am. He would not do it if I were chairman of a fantastically prosperous company. Yet it must have been just as hard for my American friend to be austere as it would be for an Englishman to be inanely gay.

I am not a business man myself. I have for many years practised the art of getting other people to manage my small affairs for me, so perhaps I ought not to write about business

men. But an author is always on the horns of a dilemma. He knows he ought not to write about anything that he does not thoroughly understand. But if he confined himself to those subjects he would never write anything at all. Even if he gave himself some latitude, and allowed himself to write about things of which he knows a little, he would still find himself in a narrow place. His best hope is that if he writes freely on every subject that comes into his head he will only be found out by a few people at a time. Sailors will find him out when he writes about the sea. Insurance agents will laugh at his ignorance when he writes about premiums ; doctors will be irritated when he sets down what he thinks about measles. But the sailors will believe that he knows a great deal about insurance and disease in general ; doctors will think him an expert about ships, and so forth. And there are always far fewer people in any given profession than there are people out of it. The writer has, therefore, a good hope that those who find him out in any point which he touches will always be a minority. Minorities do not matter.

It is the consideration of this fact which gives me courage to write about business men,

and more courage now to go on and write about buildings. I know nothing about architecture, but the people who do are very few, so that the penalty of being found out will be light.

There does not seem at first glance to be any connection between business men and architecture. But there is a very real one. There is also a private connection of thought in my own mind. It was from the windows of an office, high up in one of the sky-scraper buildings, that I got my first comprehensive view of New York. There is, generally, a certain sameness about these bird's eye views of cities. The bird, and the man who gets into the position of the bird, sees a number of spires of churches sticking up into the sky, and below them a huddled mass of roofs. Sometimes tall chimneys assert themselves beside the spires. But the spires are the dominating things. The chimneys may have every appearance of arrogance, but one feels that they are upstarts. The spires hold the place of a recognised aristocracy. The bird, if he were, say, an eagle, and had not the sparrow's intimate knowledge of the life of the streets, would naturally come to the conclusion that the worship of God is the most potent factor in the life of

the European city. He would, perhaps, be wrong, but he would have a good case to make for himself when he was recounting his experiences to the other eagles.

"I have seen," he would say, "these vast nesting places of men, and the spires of the churches are far the most important things in them. They reach up higher than anything else, and there are great numbers of them."

But the eagle would not say that about New York. It is not spires, nor is it factory chimneys which stick up highest there and catch the attention of a spectator from a height. Office buildings are the dominant things. Churches are kept in what many people regard as their proper place. You can see them if you look for them, but they are subordinate. The same thing is true of another view of New York, that marvellous spectacle of the city's profile which you get in the evening from any of the Hudson River Ferry Boats. The sky line is jagged, and the silhouettes are not those of cross-crowned domes or spires, but of large buildings dedicated to commerce.

The philosophic eagle might, reasoning as he did before, leap to the conclusion that God is of little importance in the city of New York ;

that bank books there count for more than Bibles. I am not at all sure that he would be right. It looks, anyone who has seen New York must admit, as if the American who coined the phrase "the almighty Dollar" had really expressed the faith of his countrymen. But I am inclined to think that he was led into injustice by a desire to be epigrammatic. It may be that my experience was singularly fortunate, but I came to the conclusion that God counts for a good deal in the life of New York and of America generally. I do not mean that any creed has obtained for itself national recognition, or that any particular church has reached a position analogous to that of the English established church. Religion in America seems to me a confused force, which has not yet fully found itself; but it is a force. The desire to do justly, to love mercy, though scarcely perhaps to walk humbly, is present, and is coming to be mightier than the dollar.

Yet it is certainly true that the most striking buildings in New York are not ecclesiastical but commercial. This is a defiance of the old European tradition, a breach even of that feeblar tradition which America took over from Europe before she entered into pos-

session of her own soul. I am reminded of Attila's Hun with his contempt for Roman civilisation and his confidence in his own strength.

Business used to look askance at magnificence. It was the pride of the London merchant that he managed mighty affairs in an unpretentious counting-house. But we are learning from the Americans. Our Insurance companies were the first to start building sumptuous habitations for themselves. Banks and other corporations are following their example. Yet even to-day the offices in the city of London are singularly unimpressive to the eye, and many a house with world-wide influence scorns to appeal to the passer-by with anything more striking than a "Push" or "Pull" stamped in worn letters on the brass plates of a pair of swinging doors. It was a great tradition, this total lack of ostentation where mighty forces were. At first New York too felt the attraction of it. Wall Street, which is one of the older parts of the city, is not impressive to look at. The Cotton Exchange is a building of a very middling kind. Yet I am inclined to think that the instinct for magnificence displayed by the newer American captains of commerce is sound. I

am not considering the advertisement value of a great building. It may be worth something in that way, though grubbiness can also be an effective advertisement. What seems to lie at the back of the display is the desire of life to express itself in sumptuousness. The Venetians, a nation of merchants, felt this and built in the spirit of it. After all, commerce is a very great kind of life. There is energy in it, adventure, romance. It offers opportunities for struggle, promises victory, threatens defeat. Is it any wonder that men absorbed in it should feel the thrill of the *superbia vite*, and build to secure visible embodiment for the emotion? Men have always tried to build finely for their governors. King's palaces and Parliament houses are impressive everywhere. This was right when kings and parliaments were important. Now that the offices of financiers are much more important than the habitations of law-makers, they too are becoming splendid.

It is, I suppose, to be expected that these mighty buildings should have forms which at first are repellent in their strangeness. We, who were nursed in an older artistic tradition, have learned to value, perhaps too highly, restraint and dignity. The outstanding char-



acteristics of the American skyscraper seems to me to be exuberance. I am reminded of the wild spirit of one or two European buildings, of the cloisters of Belem, for instance, though there the sense of exultation expresses itself in a very different way. But the essential spirit is similar. I could imagine the builders chanting as they worked: "Behold ye are gods. Ye are all children of the Highest." They are gods who have not experienced the *tedium vitae* of Olympian happiness. But New York is not so drunken with exuberance that it cannot build with quiet dignity. Tiffany's shop in Fifth Avenue, and, a little lower down, Altmann's great department store, are buildings on which the eye rests with undisturbed satisfaction. The men who built these had more in mind than the erection of houses in which rings or stockings might conveniently be sold. They felt that commerce in jewellery or clothes was in itself a worthy thing which might be undertaken in a lofty spirit, and greatly carried on. There is a feeling of nobility in the proportion of windows and doors, in the severity of the street fronts. These might be palaces of noblemen of an ancient lineage. They are—shops. Has America discovered a dignity in

shop-keeping? The station of the Pennsylvania Railway is one of the glories of New York, and here again New York is certainly right, though I—it is a purely personal feeling—am infuriated to find the calm self-restraint of the Greeks associated with anything so blatant as a railway train. Anywhere else in the world the great hall of the Central Station would be the nave of a cathedral. It is impossible not to feel—even when hurrying for a train—that the porters are really acolytes masquerading for a moment in honour of some fantastic fool's day.

The churches of New York are of subordinate interest. Trinity Church has a singularly suggestive position, right opposite the end of Wall Street—God in protest against Mammon. But the building itself might be anywhere in England. I can fancy it in Nottingham or Bath, and there would be no need to alter the place of a stone in it. It is a dignified and beautiful parish church, but it has, as a building, nothing American about it. It has not, apparently, influenced the spirit of New York architecture. The people have not found self-expression in it. St. Patrick's Cathedral, in Fifth Avenue, is a fine, a very fine example of modern Gothic. Except the

new graduates' school buildings at Princeton this cathedral strikes me as the finest example of modern Gothic I have ever seen. But ought New York to have Gothic buildings? Here, I know, I come up against a difficult question. There are those who hold that for certain purposes—for worship and for the dignified ceremonial life of a University—the Gothic building is the one perfect form which man has devised. We cannot better it. All we can do is to soak ourselves in the spirit of the men of the great centuries of this style, and humbly try to feel as they felt so that we may build as they. It may be granted that we shall devise nothing better. I, for one, gladly admit that St. Patrick's in New York and the hall at Princeton are conceived in the old spirit, and are as perfect as any modern work of the kind is, perhaps as perfect as any modern Gothic work can be. But when all this is said it remains true that the life of New York is not the life of mediæval Rouen, of the London which built Westminster or of the Cologne which paid honour to the Three Kings. Can New York accept as its vision of the divine the conception, however splendid, of those "dear dead days"?

It may well be that I am all wrong in my

feeling about modern Gothic, that what is wanting in these buildings is not the spirit which was in the old ones. It may be that like certain finer kinds of wine they require maturing. I can conceive that a church which seems remote now, almost to the point of frigidity, may not only seem, but actually be, different two hundred years hence. It is scarcely possible to think that the prayers of generations have no effect upon the walls of the building in which they are uttered. There must cling to the place some aroma, some subtle essence of the reachings after God of generation after generation. The repentances of broken hearts, the supplications of sorrowing women, the vows of strong, hopeful souls, the pieties of meek priests, must be present still among the arches and the dim places above them. Men consecrate their temples, but it takes them centuries to do it. Perhaps Westminster would have left me cold if I had walked its aisles four hundred years ago. This lack of maturity, and not, as I suppose, the fact that they do not come of the spirit of our time, may be what is the matter with our newer Gothic buildings.

There is one church in New York—there may be others unknown to me—which gives

the impression of having grown out of the life which dwelt in it, in the same sense in which certain English churches, those especially of the Sussex country-side, have grown rather than been deliberately and consciously built. This is the unpretentious building known as "The Little Church Round the Corner." The affectionate familiarity of the name suits the place and means more to the discerning soul than any dedication could mean. The student of architecture would perhaps reckon this church contemptible, and having seen it once would bestow no second glance upon it. It is built in no style of recognised orthodoxy. I do not know its history, but it looks as if bits had been added on to it time after time by people who knew nothing and cared nothing for unity of design, but who had in their hearts a genuine love for the building. It is an expression of life, this little church, but not, I think, of the life of New York. It is as if someone had made a little garden and filled it with all kinds of delicate sweet-smelling flowers in a glade of a mighty forest. Within the garden are the flowers, tended and well-beloved. Outside and all around are great trees with gnarled trunks and far-off branches which have fought

their own way in desperate competition to the sunlight. I could, I think, worship very faithfully in that "Little Church Round the Corner," but I should have to shut New York out of my heart every time I passed through the doors of it. Just so I can find delight in the sweetness of Keble's *Christian Year*, but while I do I must forget the sea, and how "at His word the stormy wind ariseth which lifteth up the waves thereof." I must cease to be in love with the perils of adventuring.

There is one church in New York which seems to me to have caught the spirit of the city, the unfinished Cathedral of St. John the Divine. It gives the worshipper within its walls a strange sense of titanic strength striving majestically to express itself in stone. I am told that the building is to be finished in some other way, in accordance with the rules and orthodoxies of some school of architecture. This may not be true, but even if it is there still remains the hope that enough has been already done to preserve for the finished work its character of relentless strength. If its builders are brave enough to go on as they have begun this cathedral should rank in the eyes of future generations as one of the great

houses of God in the world. St. Mark's, with its fantastic spires and gorgeous colouring, expresses all the past history of Venice and her commerce with the East, all which that strange republic learnt of the Divine, from the glow of Syrian deserts, where sun-baked caravans crawled slowly, and from the heavy scents of Midianitish merchandise in the market-places of Damascus. The confused and misty aisles of Westminster embody in stone a realised conception of the tumultuous life of London, of its black river weary with the weight of the untold wealth it bears, of its crowds thronging narrow places, of its streets where past and present look suspiciously into each others' eyes, while things which are to be already push for elbow-room. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, standing on the very edge of its steep, broken hill, gives me, as no other building does, the sense of strength—of the kind of strength which will do rather than endure, which is unwilling to abide restraint of any kind.

The building is a fit mate for the skyscrapers, can hold its own among them because its spirit is their spirit, touched with the flame of inspiration by the torch of the Divine. The very absence of unity of style seems the

crowning glory of it. It is Attila's Hun once more. What did he care that the spoils in which he decked himself were of various fashionings? It is the dynamite blasting living rock. It is, as it seems to me, New York in process of being given in stone an interpretation which neither words nor music have given her yet. It will be a loss not only to New York, but to the world, if the builders of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine allow themselves to be frightened by the spectre of European artistic tradition. They may tame their church, civilise it, curl and comb the seven locks of its hair. If they do the great strength will surely depart from it, and it will become a common thing.



## CHAPTER IV

### HOLIDAY FEVER

WE shall always be thankful that we paid a visit to Atlantic City. It is not, I believe, one of the places of which Americans are particularly proud. The trains which connect it with New York have indeed the reputation of being the fastest in the world, but that may not be because everyone is in a great hurry to get to Atlantic City. They run at high speed both ways, and it is quite possible that some men may be in an equal hurry to get away. Our friends were certainly a little cold when we said we were going there. Left to ourselves, or meekly following, as we generally do, the advice given to us by well-instructed people, we should not have gone to Atlantic City. But we were shepherded there by circumstances, fate, or whatever the power is called which regulates the minor affairs of life. And we were glad we went. No one, says Tennyson, can be more wise than destiny.

Our visit to Atlantic City went to prove the truth of that profound remark.

The means which destiny used for getting us to Atlantic City was a play. We had a play of our own, and it was produced there for the first time on the west side of the Atlantic. American theatrical managers believe in experimenting with a play in some minor place before taking the plunge of the New York production. They call this—in a phrase not unknown in England—“trying it on the dog.” It seems to me rather a good plan. The verdict of the dog is not indeed of great value. Dogs, human dogs, are the same everywhere. They are afraid to say they like anything which has not got the seal of a great city’s approval set on it. They take refuge in damning with dubious phrase; and, in fact, no one with any experience much minds what they say. But the experimental production has a value of its own apart from the opinion of the dog. The company shakes down and learns to work together. The first performance in an important place, when the time comes for it, is much more likely to go smoothly if the actors have faced audiences, even audiences of the dog kind, every night for a week beforehand.

We did not understand the philosophy of these dog productions at first, and were therefore a little nervous all the time we were in Atlantic City, but not, I am glad to say, nervous enough to have our enjoyment of the place spoiled. Nothing would induce me to say, or for a single moment to think, that Atlantic City is in any way a characteristic product of American civilisation. All our civilisations produce places of this kind. But it is fair, I think, to say that America does this particular thing better than any other country. Superior people might say that America does it worse; but I am not superior. I recognise that the toiling masses have a right to revel during their brief holidays in the way that appeals to them as most delightful. I do not revel in that way myself; but that is not because I have found better ways, but only because I am growing older and prefer to take my humble pleasures quietly. When I was young I enjoyed tumultuous pleasures as much as anyone. I revelled with the best of my day in the town of Douglas; and if I did not get as much out of it as I might now if I were young again, it was only because there was not, in those days, nearly so much in it. The holiday resort has been enormously developed

during the last twenty-five years, and America, judging by Atlantic City—and I am told Coney Island is better—is in the very van of human progress.

I have seen Portrush, our humble Irish attempt at a pleasure city. I have seen Blackpool, which far surpasses Portrush in its opportunities for delight. I have seen the Lido, where the Germans bathe. I have seen Brighton, which is spoiled by a want of abandon and a paralysing respect for gentility. Atlantic City outdoes them all. Atlantic City is Portrush, Blackpool, Brighton, the Lido, and Ostend rolled into one, and then, in all the essential features of such places, raised to the third power so to speak; multiplied by itself and then multiplied by itself again.

Our friends, as I have hinted, warned us against Atlantic City. They said :

“ You won’t enjoy *that* place.”

Or, varying the emphasis in a way very flattering to our reputations for cultivated gentility :

“ *You* won’t enjoy that place.”

Or, altering the emphasis once more, after we had explained apologetically that we went there on business :

“ You won’t *enjoy* that place.”

When we persisted in going, they took it for granted that we wanted to argue with them. Then they closed the discussion with an emphatic insistence on the one word which had hitherto escaped them :

“ You *won't* enjoy that place.”

One friend, mistaking us for cynical students of the weaknesses and follies of humanity, varied the warning in another way :

“ You won't,” he said, “ enjoy it *now*. It's not the season.”

They were all wrong. In spite of the private anxiety which gnawed at our hearts we did enjoy Atlantic City. We enjoyed it all the more because we went there out of season. It is our deliberate practice to visit places of this kind out of season, and the date of the production of our play at Atlantic City was a most fortunate one for us. We no longer want to revel. The time for that is past for us, but we do want to understand, and we seem to get nearer that when the chief side-shows are closed, when the hotels are being painted, and when the sea has given up the attempt to sparkle and look cheerful. In one of Mr. Anthony Hope's novels there is a statesman of great craftiness who warns a Prince Consort that he must not think he

knows the Queen, his wife, because he is allowed to see her in her stays. I daresay there is a good deal in the warning. But I cannot help feeling that you would understand a queen better if you saw her frequently, let us say, in her dressing-gown, than if you never saw her except in her robes of State, with the crown royal firmly fixed on her head with hairpins. It must be the same with pleasure cities. One knows them, not well, but a little better when they have tucked up their skirts, put on old blouses and turned to the task of cleaning up after the festivities.

It is more instructive to walk along the broad sea front of Blackpool through a fine chill mist of January rain than to stand there on a blazing August day when the colliers' week of holiday is in full swing. Deeper thoughts come to him who gazes at the forlorn rows of notices that lodgings are to let within than to him who hurries through street after street looking for some place in which to lay his head. I am sure that I catch the essential spirit of the Lido when the November sea is brown, when the sands are drab, when the thousands of bathing-boxes stand locked and empty than I would if smiling wavelets enticed plump Germans to splash in them and

*braut paars* lingered, indecently affectionate, in the shadows behind. I did once, accidentally, see Portrush in the very height of its season, and it was a disappointment to me. Bebies of girls, hatless but with hair elaborately dressed, paraded the streets with their arms round each others' waists. Critical young men, in well-creased suits of the kind supposed to be suitable for yachting, watched other girls being taught to swim in a deep pool. Nursemaids helped children to build sand castles. Mothers of forty years of age or thereabouts sat uncomfortably knitting with their backs against the rocks. More than five thousand people carried hand cameras about. Lovers, united for a day or two, wrote each others' names in huge letters on the sand, where the retiring tide had left it smooth and dry. There was too much to feel, far too much to think about. I grew confused and desperate. I could not understand. Out of season the observer has a better chance. If Portrush confused me, Atlantic City, seen in its full glory, would have bewildered me utterly. Also out of season I am not tormented with vain regrets. I am spared the vexation of feeling that a yachting suit, carefully creased, would no longer lift my heart up to the skies. It is not forced

upon me that my pulses no longer throb wildly at the sight of girls who smile. I do not think how sad it is that I shall never again want to win the applause of a crowd by taking a header into deep water from a giddy height. I am glad that we visited Atlantic City out of season.

I forget how many piers Atlantic City has, but it is unusually rich in these structures, and I have no doubt that the builders of them were wise. A pier makes an irresistible appeal to the pleasure-seeker. He would rather dance on a pier, under proper shelter of course and on a good floor, than in a well-appointed saloon on solid land. He would rather eat ices on a pier than in an ordinary shop, though he has to pay more for them, the cost of the ice being the same and the twopence for entry into the enchanted region being an extra. A cinematograph show draws more customers if it is on a pier. The reason of this is that the normal and properly constituted holiday-maker wants to get as much sea as he can. When he is not in it he likes to have it all round him or as nearly all round him as possible without going in a boat. Boats, for several reasons, are undesirable. They sometimes make people sick. They are expensive.



They demand an undivided allegiance. You cannot have a cinematograph, for instance, in a boat. The nearest thing to a boat is a pier. It is almost surrounded by the sea. That is why piers are a regular feature of up-to-date pleasure cities, and why Atlantic City has so many of them. It is all to the credit of our revellers that they love to be near the sea, to feel it round them, to hear it splashing under their feet. The sea is the cleanest thing there is. You can vulgarise it; but it is almost impossible, except at the heads of long estuaries, to dirty it. It seems as if pleasure-seekers, who are also seekers of the sea, must be essentially clean people, clean-hearted, otherwise they would not feel as strongly impelled as they evidently do to get into touch with the ocean. And it is real ocean at Atlantic City. Far out one sees ships passing, the lean three-masted schooners of the American coasting trade, trawlers in fleets, tramp steamers, companionless things, all of these given to the real business of the sea, not to pleasure voyaging. The eye lingers on them, and it is hard afterwards to adjust the focus of the mental vision to the long wooden parade, itself almost a pier, the flaunting sky signs, the innumerable tiny shops where every

kind of useless thing is sold. Atlantic City has, indeed, some boats of its own, boats which go out from a haven tucked away behind the north corner of the parade, and pass up and down across the sea front. Their sails are covered with huge advertisements of cigarettes and chewing gums. They are manned, no doubt, by the kind of long-shoremen who cater for the trippers' pleasure. They have in them as passengers whoever in America corresponds to the London Cockney. Among ships which sail these are surely as the women of the streets. But you cannot altogether degrade a boat. She retains some pathetic remnant of her dignity, even if you make her sails into advertisement hoardings. It was good to watch these boats, their masts set far forward, after the American cat-boat fashion, making short swift tacks among the sandbanks over which the Atlantic rollers foamed threateningly.

It is easy to understand why the shops along sea fronts of places like Atlantic City are for the most part devoted to the sale of useless things. Picture postcards I reckon to be very nearly useless. They give a transient gleam of pleasure to the buyer, none at all to the person who receives them. The whole class

of goods called souvenirs is entirely useless. The photographs taken by seaside artists are not such as can give any satisfaction to the sitters afterwards. Yet the impulse to buy these things and to be photographed is almost irresistible. We yielded, not to the seductions of the photographers, nor to the lure of the souvenir sellers, but with shameless self-abandonment to the postcard shops. I found it very hard to pass any of them without buying. I still have many of the Atlantic City postcards, and I look at them whenever I feel in danger of growing conceited in order to reduce myself to a proper condition of humility. We also—moved by what strange impulse?—bought several instruments for cutting up potatoes. Under ordinary circumstances a potato-chopper has no attractions whatever for me. I could pass a shop window filled with them and not feel one prick of covetous desire. And Atlantic City of all places in the world was for us—I suppose in some degree for every visitor—most unsuitable for the purchase of kitchen utensils. We knew, even while we bought them, that we should have to haul them with us round America and back across the Atlantic, that they would be a perpetual nuisance to us all

the time, and in all probability no use whatever when we got them home. Yet we bought them. If the dollar we spent on them had been the last we possessed we should have bought them all the same. Such is the strange effect of places like Atlantic City on people who are, in other places, sane enough. I can analyse and understand the impulse well enough though I cannot resist it. It is the holiday spirit of the place which gets a hold on visitors. All a whole long year we commonplace people, who are not millionaires, are spending our money warily on things of carefully calculated usefulness. We watch each shilling and see that it buys its full worth of something which will make life more tolerable or pleasant. Then comes the brief holiday, and with it the sudden loosing of all bonds of ordinary restraint. Our souls revolt against spending money on things which are any real good to us. We want, we are compelled to fling it from us, asking in exchange nothing but trifles light as air. In desperate reaction against the tyranny of domestic economics we even insist on buying things, like potato-cutters, which will be an actual encumbrance to us afterwards.

Cowper represents John Gilpin's wife as

insisting on taking her own wine on a pleasure party, and writes of her that

“ Though on pleasure she was bent  
She had a frugal mind.”

I refuse to believe that of any human being, and I count Cowper a good poet but a bad psychologist. The man who brought a load of potato-cutters down to Atlantic City was probably not a poet at all, but he had a profound knowledge of human nature. He knew that he would sell the things there. It was the place of all places in the world for his trade. It is a high tribute to Atlantic City as a holiday resort that it forced us to buy two of these machines. None of the other pleasure cities we have visited have had such a drastic effect upon us. Postcards we yield to everywhere. Even the dreariest of second-rate watering-places can sell them to us. In Blackpool I found a paper-knife irresistible. In Portrush I once bought a coloured mug. Atlantic City alone could have sold me potato-choppers, two of them.

In towns and rural districts where men and women live their ordinary lives, work, love, and ultimately die, it is the rarest thing possible to see any grown person wheeled

about in a perambulator or bath-chair. Occasionally some pitiful victim of a surgeon's skill is lifted out of the door of a nursing home and placed tenderly in one of these vehicles. He is wheeled about in the fresh air in obedience to the doctor's orders, no doubt in hope that he will recover sufficient strength to make another operation possible. But a bath-chair, even now when surgery has become a recognised form of sport, is a very unusual sight. In all pleasure cities it is quite common. In Brighton, for instance, or at Bournemouth, anyone who can, with any chance of being believed, represent himself as an invalid, takes advantage of his infirmity to get himself wheeled about in a bath-chair. At international exhibitions and in some of the greater picture galleries which are also pleasure resorts it is generally possible to hire a bath-chair. Atlantic City, being, as I believe, the greatest of all such places, has devised a kind of glorified perambulator, something far more seductive than a bath-chair. It has room for two in it, and this in itself is a great advance. It has the neatest imaginable hood which you can pull over you in case of rain or if you desire privacy. It looks something like a very small but sumptuously appointed motor-car.

You need not even pretend to be a cripple in Atlantic City in order to make good your right to enter one of these chairs. All sorts of people, brisk-looking young girls and men whose limbs are plainly sound, are wheeled about, not only shamelessly but with evident enjoyment. There are immense numbers of these vehicles, more, surely, than there are invalids in the whole world. Out of season when we saw them they are absurdly cheap, almost the only thing in America except oysters and chocolates and, curiously enough, silk stockings, which are cheap judged by European standards. I longed very earnestly to go in one of these vehicles, but at the last moment I always shrank from the strangeness of it. Neither the taxi of the London streets nor the outside car of my native land ever made so strong an appeal to me as these perambulators of Atlantic City. I suppose it was the holiday spirit of the place again. Girls and young men, certainly middle-aged men, would feel like fools if they sat in perambulators anywhere else, but it is a sweet and pleasant thing—according to a Latin poet who must have known—to play the fool in the proper place. Atlantic City is the proper place. Hence the enormous numbers of perambulatoirs.

The hotels in Atlantic City are, most of them, as fantastic in appearance as the place itself. I imagine that the architects who planned them must, before they began their work, have been kept for weeks on the sea front and forced to go to all the entertainments which offered themselves by day and night. They were probably fed on crab dressed in various ways and given ginrikkys to drink. Then when allowed to drop to sleep in the early morning they would naturally dream. At the end of a fortnight or so of this treatment their dreams would be imprinted on their memories, and they would draw plans of hotels suitable for Atlantic City. Only in this way, I think, can some of the newer hotels have been conceived. They are not ugly, far from it. Crab, dressed as American cooks dress it, does not induce nightmares, nor is a ginrikky nearly so terrific a drink as it sounds. The architect merely dreams, as Coleridge did when his Kubla Khan decreed a stately pleasure dome in Xanadu. But Coleridge dreamed on opium, and his visions were of stately things. The Atlantic City hotel is less stately than fantastic. It is a building which anyone would declare to be impossible if he did not see in it actual existence.



It will always be a source of regret to me that I did not stay in one of these hotels which captivated me utterly. It was just what, as a boy, I used to imagine that the palace of the Sleeping Beauty must be. A look at it brought back dear memories of the transformation scenes of pantomimes, in the days before transformation scenes went out of fashion. It was coloured pale green all over, and, looked at with half closed eyes, made me think of mermaids. I am sure that it was perfectly delightful inside ; but we did not stay there. A friend had recommended to us another hotel, of great excellence and comfort, but built before Atlantic City understood the proper way to treat architects. In any case we could not have stayed in the pale green hotel. It was closed. We were in Atlantic City out of season.

## CHAPTER V

### THE IRON TRAIL

OUR luck, which had up to that point been as good as luck could be, failed us miserably when we started for Chicago. The very day before we left New York there was a blizzard and a snowstorm. Not in New York itself. There was only a very strong wind there. Nor in Chicago, but all over the district which lay between. One train was held up for eighteen hours in a snow-drift. The last fragments of food in the restaurant car were consumed, and the passengers arrived chilled and desperately hungry at their destination. We might have been in that train. It was not, indeed, possible for us to leave New York a day sooner than we did, but I cannot see why the blizzard could not have waited a little. Twenty-four hours' delay would have made no difference to it. It might even have gathered force. To us it would have made all the difference in the world. We missed a

great experience. That is why I say that our luck failed us at this point.

It would not, at the moment, have been a pleasant experience, and I do not pretend that we should have enjoyed either the cold or the hunger; and we are not the sort of people who, under such circumstances, secure the last sardine. We should, owing to our feebleness in self-assertion, have been among the first to go foodless. But afterwards we could have thought about it and all our lives told steadily improving stories about the adventure. The recollection of it would have added zest to every remaining hour of comfort in our lives. What is a short spell of suffering compared to such enduring joys? But in these matters we have been singularly unlucky through life. We have never been in a shipwreck or a railway accident, or been forced to escape from a burning house. Only once did a horse run away with us—and it fell, almost immediately after making its dash for liberty. No burglar has roused us to do battle with him in the middle of the night. It seems hard, when we have been denied all the great adventures of life, to miss, by the narrow margin of a single day, the minor excitement of being snowed up in a train.

However, it is useless to complain. The thing was not to be and it was not. Our journey was commonplace and unadventurous. We hired what is called a drawing-room car on our train. This is an extravagant thing to do. For people of our humble means it is almost criminally reckless. Some day, when we cannot afford to have our boots re-soled, when we are looking at the loaves in the windows of bakers' shops with vain desire, when we have neither money nor credit left to us, we shall think with poignant regret of the huge sums we spent on that drawing-room car. We shall be sorry, at least one of us will be sorry, that we were not more careful when he or she, the survivor, cannot afford a simple tombstone to mark the grave of the other. But at that moment the money, in spite of Atlantic City, being actually in our pockets, we felt that the drawing-room car was an absolute necessity. I should take it again if I were going to Chicago. But then we are not yet reduced to penury.

The alternative to a drawing-room car, on most trains, is a section in a Pullman sleeping-car. Against this we rose in revolt. I cannot imagine how the Americans, who are in many ways much more highly civilised

than Europeans, tolerate the existence of Pullman sleeping-cars. I am not physically—though I am in every other way—an exceptionally modest man. I have, for instance, no objection to mixed bathing, and it does not make me blush to meet one of the housemaids in an hotel when, dressed only in my pyjamas, I am searching for the bathroom. But I do object to undressing in the corridor of a Pullman sleeping-car, and I cannot, not being a professional acrobat, undress in my berth. For a lady the thing is, of course, much worse. Besides the undressing, and the still more difficult dressing again, there is the business of washing in the morning; washing, and for most men, shaving. You go into a sort of dressing-room to do that. There are not nearly basins enough. There is not room enough. Somebody is sure to walk on your sponge, will walk on your toothbrush, too, unless you happen to be a clerk, and therefore practised in the art of holding things behind your ear.

I think Americans are beginning to recognise that these sleeping-cars are barbarous. I met one lady who told me that she would always gladly sacrifice a new dress in order to spend the money on a drawing-room car. I

entirely sympathise with her; but, even if you are prepared for these heroic extravagances, you cannot always get a drawing-room car. There was one occasion on which we failed, though we telegraphed three days before to engage one. On some of the best trains of the best lines, there are also what are called "compartments." These are comparable in comfort to the cabins of the International Company of Wagons Lits on the continental trains *de luxe*, though inferior to the London and North-Western Railway Company's sleeper. No one has any right to grumble who secures a compartment. Unfortunately it is not every railway company which has them, and it is by no means every train on which they are run.

The drawing-room car, when you get it, is, in itself, a comfortable thing to travel in. There is a good deal of room in it. There is satisfactory lavatory accommodation. The attendants are civil and competent. Anyone who can sleep in a train at all could sleep in a drawing-room car if only he were not waked up every time the train stops or starts. Trains must stop occasionally, of course. But there is no real need for emphasizing the stops as American trains do. It is possible—

I know this, because both the French and English trains do it—to stop without giving inexperienced passengers the impression that there has been a collision. Stopping is not a thing a train ought to be proud of. There is no reason why the attention of passengers should be drawn to it forcibly. For starting with a bang there is, of course, more excuse. To start at all is a triumph. It is a victory of mind over inert matter, and anyone who accomplishes it wants, naturally and properly, to be admired. I can understand the annoyance of the train, conscious of being able to start, at feeling that its passengers, who ought to be praising it, are perhaps sound asleep. Yet I cannot help thinking that all the admiration any train ought to want might be secured without excessive violence. Suppose a notice were hung up in every coach: “This train will stop twice during the night, and after each stop will start again. Passengers are requested to realise that this is not an easy thing to do. They will therefore admire the train.” No passenger with a spark of decent feeling in him would refuse an appreciative pat to the engine in the morning. We do as much for horses who cannot drag us nearly so far or half so fast. We do it for

dogs who do not drag us at all, only fetch things for us. We should certainly treat engines with the same kindness if they were a little tenderer to us. But I refuse to pat, stroke, or in any way fondle an engine which, out of mere vanity, wakes me up by starting boisterously.

We ran during the night through the tail of the snowstorm which had stopped the train the day before. We had left New York in pleasant autumn weather, on one of those days which, without being cold, has an exhilarating nip about it. We arrived in Chicago in what seemed to us midsummer weather, though I believe it was not really hot for Chicago. We passed on our way through a snow-covered district, and had the greatest difficulty in keeping warm during the night. This is one of the advantages of travelling in America. The distances are so immense that in the course of a single journey you have the chance of trying several kinds of climate. In England you get the same result by staying in one place. But the American plan is much better. There, having discovered a climate which suits you, you can settle down in it with a fair amount of confidence that it will remain what it is for a week or two at a time.



In England, whether you travel about or stay still, you have got to accustom yourself to continual variety.

After breakfast, when the train had passed the snow-covered region and the air became a little warmer, we sat on the platform at the end of the observation car and looked out at the country through which we were going. Nothing could conceivably be more monotonous. The land was quite flat, the railway line was absolutely straight. The train sped on at a uniform pace of about forty miles an hour. As far back as the eye could see were the rails of the track, narrowing and narrowing until they looked like a single sharp line, ruled with remorseless precision from some point at an infinite distance in the east. On each side of us were broad spaces of flat land, reaching, still flat, to the horizons north and south of us. Every half-hour or so we passed a village, a collection of meanly conceived, two-storied houses with a hideous little church standing just apart from them. Hour after hour we rushed on with no other change of scenery; no mountain, no lake, no river, just flat land, with a straight line ruled on it. I suppose that the life of the people who inhabit that region is as interesting, in reality,

as any other life. The seasons change there, I hope. Harvests ripen, cows calve, men die ; but on us, strangers from a very different land, the unvarying flatness of it all lay like an intolerable weight.

Yet that journey gave me, more than anything else I saw, a sense of the greatness of the American people. There is, I suppose, some one thing in the history of every nation which impresses the man who realises, even dimly, the meaning of it, more than anything else does. Elizabethan England's buccaneering adventures to the Spanish main seem to me to make intelligible the peculiar greatness of England more than anything else her people have ever done. Revolutionary France in arms against Europe is France at her most glorious, with her special splendour at its brightest. So my imagination fixes on America's settlement of her vast central plain as the greatest thing in her story. Her fight for independence was fine, of course ; but many other nations have fought such wars and won or, just as finely, lost. Her civil war stirs thoughts of greatness in anyone who reads it. But this tremendous journey of the American people from the east to the Mississippi shores, halfway across

a continent, was something greater than any war.

First, no doubt, hunters went out from the narrow strip of settled, seaboard land. They pushed their adventurous way across the Alleghanies, finding passes, camping in strange fastnesses. They came upon the westward flowing waters of the great network of rivers which drain into the Mississippi. They made their long, dim trails. They fought, with equal cunning, bands of Indian braves. They returned, in love with wildness, weaned from the ways of civilisation, to tell their tales of strange places by the firesides of sober men. Or they did not return. They were great men, and their achievements very great, but not the greatest.

More wonderful was the accomplishment of those long streams of settlers who crossed Virginia and Pennsylvania to find the upper reaches of the waterways which should lead and bear them mile by mile to the Mississippi shore. It is barely a century since these men, home lovers not wanderers, with the call of the wild in their ears, home builders not hunters, went floating in rude arks down the Ohio, the Cumberland, the Tennessee. With unimaginable courage and faith they took with

them women, children, cattle, and household plenishing. Somewhere each ark grounded, and the work of settlement began. I saw the woods which stretch for miles over rolling hills and round lakes beyond that curious colony of very wealthy people at Tuxedo. My imagination pictured for me, as I gazed at these woods, the outpost settlements of a hundred years ago. The "half-faced camp," rudest of the dwellings of civilised man, was built. Trees were "girdled" or cut down with patient toil. A small clearing was made amid the interminable miles of forest land. I imagined the men, lean and grim, the anxious women, ever on the alert because of the perpetual menace of the Indians who might lurk a stone's throw off among the shadows of the trees.

We can guess at the satisfaction of each triumph won ; the day when the lean-to shed, with its open side, gave place to the log hut, still rude enough ; the day when some great tree, sapless from its "girdling," was hewn down at last ; the adding of acre after acre of cleared land ; the incredibly swift growth of villages and towns ; the pushing out of settlements, south and north, into yet stranger wildernesses, away from the friendly banks of

the waterways. The courage and endurance of these settlers must have been far beyond that required of soldiers, explorers or adventurers. Step by step, almost literally step by step, they made this wonderful journey, conquering every acre as they passed it. Yet we know very little about them. Homer made a list of the ships which sailed for Troy. Who has chronicled the arks and rafts of these still braver men? Camoens wrote his "Lusiad" to glorify the voyage of Vasco da Gama round the African coast. All England's Elizabethan literature is, rightly understood, an interpretation of the spirit of Drake and Raleigh. No one has written an epic of these American pioneer settlers. Yet surely if ever men deserved such commemoration they did.

Our train ran on and on at forty miles an hour, and my spirit was cowed by the vast monotony. What sort of spirit had the men who faced it first, to whom the conquest of a mile was a great achievement, to whom it must have seemed that there was no end to it at all? I wonder whether there was in them some great kind of faith, of which we have lost the secret now, a belief that God Himself had bidden them go forward? Or perhaps there was strong in them that instinct for the

conquest of nature which, whether he knew it or not, has always been in man, which has made him greater than the beasts, only a little lower than the angels. Or perhaps it was hunger for life itself, not for a fuller or a richer life, but for the bare material existence, which sent them on, threatened by want in civilised places, to look for ground where things would grow, where the fruit of their toil would not be taken from them. To find a parallel for the achievement of these men the mind must go back to dim ages before history began, when our ancestors—why and how we cannot guess—learned to light fires, chip flints, snare beasts, make laws, groped through a palpable obscurity towards justice and right, fought those impossible battles of theirs which have won for us the kingship of the world. Theirs was an achievement greater indeed than that of America's pioneer settlers, but of the same kind.

I went to church in New York on Thanksgiving Day, and I, though a stranger, was given the privilege of reading aloud that wonderful chapter in the Book of Deuteronomy which tells how God led His people through a great and terrible wilderness. I forgot, as I read it, all about Israel and Sinai. I re-

membered how the people among whom I was had journeyed across their vast continent. They are not my people. Their glory is none of mine. Their Thanksgiving Day had nothing to do with me, but emotion thrilled me strangely as I read. I wondered, thanked, and bent my head with fear, so great was the past which is remembered, so terrible the warning which follows the recital: "Beware, lest thou at all forget the Lord thy God."

The observation car, with its sheltered platform at the back of it, is a pleasant feature of the long-distance American train, one which might, with advantage, be copied in Europe. But the best thing, the most wholly satisfactory, about American railway travelling, is that certain trains are fined for being late. This happens in England, I think, certainly in Ireland, in the case of mail trains. It does them a lot of good, but gives small gratification to the suffering passengers, because the Post Office authorities take the money. In America the passengers get the fine. Our train was an hour and a quarter late in getting to Chicago, and we were handed a dollar each as compensation for our annoyance. I felt sorrier than ever that we had not travelled the day before in the train that was delayed by the blizzard.

Then we should have got eighteen dollars each and been able to buy several splendid dinners to make up for our starvation.

It is not every train in America which pays for unpunctuality in this way. I am not sure that the rule applies even to express trains all over the continent, nor do I know whether the railway companies deal thus justly with their passengers of their own free will. It seems very unlikely that they do. I am inclined to think that there must be law on the subject, either a law made by the State of Illinois, or, as I hope, one made by Congress itself. However this may be, I have no doubt at all that the law, if it is a law, ought to be made and strictly enforced in every civilised country. I travelled once by a London and North-Western express train, which was three hours late ; and I suffered a loss, was actually obliged to disburse no less a sum than £2, 18s. in consequence. I tried in vain to make the Company see that it ought to pay me back that £2, 18s. I never got a penny. Yet the offence of the American company was a trifling one in comparison. It was one hour and a quarter late in a journey supposed to occupy twenty-three hours. The London and North-Western railway took nine hours over a journey



which it professed to do in six. I cannot help feeling that the English company would have got its train to London on that occasion much more rapidly if it had known beforehand that it might have to pay each passenger fifteen shillings at Euston. We hear a great deal on this side of the Atlantic about the scandalous way in which American railway magnates control legislation. It appears that occasionally at all events the legislators exercise a very salutary control over the railways.

Charges of corrupting senators are certainly made against American railway directors. They may conceivably be true. If they are it seems desirable, in the interests of the passengers, that some of the British railways would take in hand the task of corrupting the House of Commons in the American way. The morals of that assembly could in no case be much worse than they are, so there would be little loss in that way, while the gain to the public would be immense if trains, even a few of the best trains, were forced under heavy penalties to keep time.

## CHAPTER VI

### ADVANCE, CHICAGO!

CHICAGO possesses one exceedingly good hotel. We know this by experience. The other hotels in the city may be equally good, but we shall never try them. Having found one almost perfect hotel, we shall, whenever we visit that city again, go back to it. But I expect that all the other hotels are good too, very good; for Chicago appears to take an interest in its hotels. In most cities, perhaps in all other cities, hotels are good or bad according as their managers are efficient, or the reverse. The city itself does not care about its hotels any more than it cares about its bootmakers. A London bootmaker might provide very bad leather for the soles of a stranger's boots. The *Times* would not deal with the bootmaker in a special article. It might be very difficult to obtain hot water in one of the great London hotels—I have seen it stated, on the authority

of an American, that it is very difficult—but London itself does not care whether it is or not. The soling of boots and the comfort of casual guests are, according to the generally prevailing view, affairs best settled between the people directly interested, the traveller on the one hand and the bootmaker or manager on the other. No one else thinks that he has a right to interfere.

Chicago takes a different view. It has a sense of civic responsibility for its hotels, possibly also for its bootmakers. I did not try the bootmakers, and therefore cannot say anything certainly about them. But I am sure about the hotels. It happened that there was a letter awaiting my arrival at the hotel, the very excellent hotel, in which we stayed. This letter was not immediately delivered to me. I believe that I ought to have asked for it, that the hotel manager expects guests to ask for letters, and that I had no reasonable ground of complaint when the letter was not delivered to me. Nor did I complain. I am far too meek a man to complain about anything in a large hotel. I am desperately afraid of hotel officials. They are all much grander than I am, and occupy far more important

positions in the world. I should not grumble if a princess trod on my toe. Princesses have a right, owing to the splendour of their position, to trample on me. But I would rather grumble at a princess than complain to a head waiter or the clerk in charge of the office of a large hotel. Princesses are common clay compared to these functionaries. But even if I were a very brave man, and even if I believed that one man was as good as another and I the equal of the manager of a large hotel, I should not have complained about the failure to deliver that letter. The hotel when we were there was very full, and full of the most important kind of people, doctors. It was not to be expected that such a trifle as a letter for me would engage the attention of anybody.

Next morning there was a paragraph in one of the leading Chicago papers about my letter, and the manager of the hotel was told plainly in clear print, that he must do his business better than he did. I was astonished when the manager, taking me solemnly apart, showed me the paragraph, astonished and terror-stricken. I apologised at once for daring to have a letter addressed to me at his hotel. I apologised for not asking for it when I arrived.

I apologised for the trouble his staff had been put to in carrying the letter up to my room in the end. Then I stopped apologising because, to my amazement, the manager began. He apologised so amply that I came gradually to feel as if I were not entirely in the wrong. Also I realised why it is that this hotel—and no doubt its fellows in Chicago—is so superlatively good. Chicago keeps an eye on them. The press is alive to the fact that every citizen of a great city, even a hotel manager, should do not merely his duty but more, should practise counsels of perfection, perform works of supererogation, deliver letters which are not asked for.

The incident is in itself unimportant, but it seems to me to illustrate the spirit of Chicago. It is a great city and is determined to get things done right. It has besides, and this is its rare distinction, an unfaltering conviction that it can get things done right. Most communities are conscious of some limitations of their powers. For Chicago there are no limitations at all anywhere. Whatever ought to be done Chicago will do. Nothing is too small, nothing too great to be attempted and carried through. It may be an insignificant matter, like the com-

fort of a helpless and foolish stranger. It may be a problem against which civilised society has broken its teeth for centuries, like the evil of prostitution. Chicago is convinced that it can be got right and Chicago means to do it.

I admire this sublime self-confidence. I ought always to be happy when I am among men who have it, because I was born in Belfast, and the first air I breathed was charged with exactly this same intensely bracing ozone of strong-willedness.

Belfast is very like Chicago. If a Belfast man were taken while asleep and transported on a magic carpet to Chicago, he would not, on waking up, feel that anything very strange had happened to him. The outward circumstances of life would indeed be different, but he would find himself in all essential respects at home. He would talk to men who said "We will," with a conviction that their "we will" is the last word which can or need be said on any subject; just as he had all his life before talked to men who said "We won't" with the same certainty that beyond their "we won't" there was nothing.

Chicago is, indeed, greater than Belfast, not merely in the number of its inhabitants and the importance of its business, but in the fact that it asserts where Belfast denies. It is a greater and harder thing to say "Yes" than "No." But there is a spiritual kinship between the two places in that both of them mean what they say, and are quite sure that they can make good their "yes" and "no" against the world. If ever the rest of America finds itself up against Chicago as the British Empire is at present up against Belfast, the result will be the hopeless bewilderment of the rest of America.

I was in Chicago for a very short time. I did not see any of the things which visitors usually see there. I went there with certain prejudices. I had read, like everyone else, Mr. Upton Sinclair's account of the slaughter of pigs in Chicago. I had read several times over the late Mr. Frank Norris' *The Pit*. I had read and heard many things about the wonderful work of Miss Jane Addams. I had a vague idea that Chicago was both better and worse than other places, that God and the devil had joined battle there more definitely than elsewhere, that the points at issue were

plainer, that there was something nearer to a straight fight in Chicago between good and evil than we find in other places. "We are here," says Matthew Arnold,

"As on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies strive by night."

In Chicago I felt the armies would be less ignorant, the alarms a little less confused. I am not sure now that this is so. It may be quite as hard in Chicago as it is anywhere else to find out quite certainly what is right; which, in certain tangled matters, is God's side and which is the devil's. But I do not believe that the Chicago man, any more than the Belfast man, is tormented with the paralysis of indecision. He may, and very likely will, do a great many things which will turn out in the end not to be good things. But he will do them quite unfalteringly. When, having done them, he has time to look round at the far side of them, he may discover that there was some mistake about them somewhere. Then he will undo them and do something else instead with the same vigorous conviction. He will, in any case, keep on doing things and believing in them.



I was in a large bookseller's shop while I was in Chicago. It was so large that it was impossible to discover with any certainty what pleases Chicago most in the way of literature. There seemed to me to be copies of every book I had ever heard of waiting there for buyers, and, I presume, they would not wait, unless buyers were likely to come. But I was struck with the very large number of books dealing with those subjects which may be classed roughly under the term Eugenics. There were more of these books in that shop than I had ever seen before. I should not have guessed that there were so many in the world. I may, of course, have received a wrong impression. This particular shop had its books arranged according to subjects. There was not, as generally in England and Ireland, a counter devoted to the latest publications, or a series of shelves given over to books priced at a shilling. In this shop all books on economics, for example, whether old or new, cheap or dear, were in one place; all books on music in another; and so forth. The idea underlying the arrangement being that a customer knows more or less the subject he wants to read about, and is pleased to find all books on that

subject ready waiting for him in rows. Our idea, on the other hand, that which underlies the arrangement of our shops, is that a customer wants, perhaps, a new book, perhaps a ten-and-sixpenny book, perhaps a shilling book, without minding much what the book is about. He is best suited by finding all the new books in one place, all the ten-and-sixpenny books in another, and all the shilling books in a third. I do not know which is the better plan, but that adopted in the Chicago shop has the effect of making the casual customer realise the very large number of books there are on every subject. I may, therefore, have been deceived about the popularity of books on eugenics in Chicago. There may be no more on sale there than elsewhere. But I think there are. Of some of the books there were very large numbers, twenty or thirty copies of a single book all standing in a row. Plainly it was anticipated that there were in Chicago twenty or thirty people who would want that particular book. I never, in any bookshop elsewhere, saw more than five or six copies of a eugenic book in stock at the same time. I also noticed that the majority of these books were cheap; not details and elab-

borate treatises on, let us say, Weissmannism and the mechanism of heredity ; but short handbooks, statements of conclusions supposed to be arrived at and practical advice suited to plain people. I formed the opinion that the study of eugenics is popular in Chicago, more popular than elsewhere, and that a good many people believe that some good is to be got out of knowing what science has to teach on these subjects.

I was told by a man who ought to have known that these books are steadily becoming more popular. The demand for them was very small five years ago. It is very large now and becoming steadily larger. This seems to me a very interesting thing. For a long time people were content just to take children as they came, and they did not bother much about the hows and the whys of the business. Grown-up men and women did not indeed believe that storks dropped babies down chimneys, or that doctors brought them in bags. But they might just as well have believed these things for all the difference such knowledge as they had made in their way of conducting the business. Their philosophy was summed up in a proverb : " When God

sends the mouth He sends the food to fill it." To go further into details struck people, twenty years ago, as rather a disgusting proceeding.

Now we have all, everywhere, grown out of this primitive innocence. We have been driven away from our old casual ways of reproducing ourselves, and are forced to think about what we are doing. There is nothing very interesting or curious about this. It is simply a rather unpleasant fact. What is interesting is that Chicago seems to be thinking more than the rest of us, is, at all events more interested than the rest of us, in the range of subjects which I have very roughly called eugenics. Chicago is, apparently, buying more books on these subjects, and presumably buys them in order to read them. Is this a symptom of the existence of a latent vein of weakness in Chicago?

I am not a very good judge of a question of this sort. The whole subject of eugenics and all the other subjects which are associated with it are extremely distasteful to me. I like to think of young men and young women falling in love with each other and getting married because they are in love, without considering

over much the almost inevitable consequences until these are forced upon them. I fancy that in an entirely healthy community things would be managed in this way, and that the result, generally speaking and taking a wide number of cases into consideration, would be a race of wholesome, sound children, fairly well endowed with natural powers and fitted to meet the struggle of life. But Chicago evidently thinks otherwise. The subject of eugenics is studied there, and, as a consequence of the study, a number of clergy of various churches have declared that they will not marry people who are suffering from certain diseases. They have all reason on their side. I admit it. I have nothing to urge against them except an old-fashioned prejudice in favour of the fullest possible liberty to the individual. Yet I cannot help feeling that it is not a sign of strength in a community that it should think very much about these things. A man seldom worries about his digestion or reads books about his stomach until his stomach and his digestion have gone wrong and begun to worry him. A great interest in what is going on in our insides is either a sign that things are not going on pro-

perly, or else a deliberate invitation to our insides to give us trouble. It is the same with the community. But I should not like to think that anything either is or soon will be the matter with Chicago. It would be a lamentable loss to the world if Chicago's definite "I will" were to weaken, if the native hue of this magnificent, self-confident resolution were to be sicklied o'er with a pale cast of thought.

At present, at all events, there is very little sign of any such disaster. It happened that while we were in Chicago there was some sort of congress of literary men. They dined together, of course, as all civilised men do when they meet to take counsel together on any subject except the making of laws. In all probability laws would be better made if parliaments were dining clubs; but this is too wide a subject for me to discuss. The literary men who met in Chicago had a dinner, and I was highly honoured by receiving an invitation to it. I wish it had been possible for me to be there. I could not manage it, but I did the next best thing, I read the report of the proceedings in the papers on the following morning. One speaker said that he looked

forward to the day when Chicago would be the world centre of literature, music and art. He was not, of course, a stranger, one of the literary men who had gathered there from various parts of America. He was a citizen of Chicago. No stranger would have ventured to say so magnificent a thing. As long as Chicago says things like that, simply and unaffectedly, and believes them, Chicago can study eugenics as much as it likes, might even devote itself to Christian Science or take to Spiritualism. It would still remain strong and sane. For this was not a silly boast, made in the name of a community which knows nothing of literature, music or art. Chicago knows perfectly well what literature is and what art is. Chicago understands what England has done in literature and art, what France has done, what Germany has done. Chicago has even a very good idea of what Athens did. If I were to say that I looked forward to inventing a perfect flying machine I should be a fool, because I know nothing whatever about flying machines and have not the dimmest idea of what the difficulties of making them are. If Chicago were as ignorant about literature and art as I am about aeronautics, its hope of becoming

the world centre of these things would be fit matter for a comic paper. What makes this boast so impressive is just the fact that Chicago knows quite well what it means.

There are no bounds to what a man can do except his own self-distrust. There is nothing beyond the reach of a city which unfalteringly believes in itself. No other city believes in itself quite so whole-heartedly as Chicago does, and I expect Chicago *will* be the world centre of literature, music and art. There is nothing to stop it, unless, indeed, Chicago itself gives up the idea and chooses to be something else instead. It may, I hope it will, decide to be the New Jerusalem, with gates of pearl and streets of gold and a tree of life growing in the midst of it. Then Chicago will be the New Jerusalem, and I shall humbly sue to be admitted as a citizen. My petition will, I am sure, be granted, for the hospitality of the people of Chicago seems to me to exceed, if that be possible, the hospitality of other parts of America. I am not sure that I should be altogether happy there, even under the new, perfected conditions of life; but perhaps I may. I was indeed born in Belfast, and as a



young man shared its spirit. That gives me hope. But I left Belfast early in life. I have dwelt much among other peoples and learned self-distrust. It may be too late for me to go back to my youth and learn confidence again. If it is too late, I shall not be really happy in Chicago.

## CHAPTER VII

### MEMPHIS AND THE NEGRO

CHICAGO is generous as well as strong. There is no note of petty jealousy in its judgment of other cities. Memphis belongs to the South and is very different from the cities of the East and the middle West. It is easily conceivable that Chicago might be a little contemptuous of Memphis, just as Belfast is more than a little contemptuous of Dublin. But Chicago displays a fine spirit. I was assured, more than once, when I was in Chicago, that Memphis is a good business city, and I suppose that no higher praise could be given than that. I never met a Belfast man who would say as much for Dublin. But, of course, Chicago is not in this matter so highly tried as Belfast is. Memphis does not assume an air of social superiority to Chicago as Dublin does to Belfast. It is not, therefore, so very

hard for Chicago to be generous in her judgment.

Perhaps "generous" is the wrong word to use. "Just" would be better. No generosity is required, because Memphis really is one of those places in which business is efficiently done. Timber, I understand, is one of the things in which Memphis deals. Cotton is another. I do not know which of the two is a greater source of trade, but cotton is the more impressive to the stranger. The place is full of cotton. Mule-carts drag great bales of it to and from railway stations. Stern-wheel steamers full of it ply up and down the Mississippi. I shall never again take out a pocket-handkerchief—I use the cheaper, not the linen or silken handkerchief—without looking to see if there is a little piece of white fluff sticking on my sleeve. When I next visit one of the vast whirling mills of Lancashire I shall think of a large quiet room in Memphis full of tables, on which are laid little bundles of cotton, each bearing a neat ticket with mysterious numbers and letters written on it. As I watch the operatives tending the huge machines which spin their endless threads, I shall think of the men who handle the samples of the cotton

crop in that Memphis office. They take the stuff between their fingers and thumbs and slowly pull it apart, looking attentively at the fine fibres which stretch and separate as the gentle pull is completed. By some exquisite sensitiveness of touch and some subtle skill of glance they can tell to within an eighth of an inch how long these fibres are. And on the length of the fibre depends to a great extent the value of the crop of the particular plantation from which that sample comes. Outside the windows of the room is the Mississippi, a broad, sluggish, grey river when I saw it; where the deeply laden steamers splash their way from riverside plantations to Memphis, and then down to New Orleans, where much of the cotton is shipped to Europe.

Beyond the room where the cotton is graded is an office, a sunlit pleasant place with comfortable writing desks and a case full of various books. You might fancy yourself in the private room of some cultivated lawyer in an English country town, if it were not that in a corner of that office there stands one of those machines which, with an infinite amount of fussy ticking, disgorge a steady stream of

ribbon stamped with figures. In New York and Liverpool men are shouting furiously at each other across the floors of Cotton Exchanges. Prices are made, raised, lowered by their shouts. Transactions involving huge sums of money are settled by a gesture or two and a shouted number. A hand thrust forward, palm outwards, sells what twenty panting steamers carry to the Memphis quays. A nod and a swiftly pencilled note buys on the assurance that the men with the sensitive fingers have rightly judged the exact length of a fibre, impalpable to most of us. All the time the shouting and the gestures are going on, thousands of miles away this machine, with detached and unexcited indifference, is stamping a record of the frenzied bidding there in the sunlit Memphis office. Chicago is no more than just when it says that Memphis is a city where business is done.

Modern business seems to me the most wonderful and romantic thing that the world has ever seen. A doctor in London takes a knife and cuts a bit out of a man's side. By doing that he acquires, if he chooses to exercise it, the right to levy a perpetual tax on the earnings of a railway somewhere in the Argen-

tine Republic. No traveller on that railway knows of his existence. None of the engine-drivers, porters, guards, or clerks who work the railway have ever heard of that doctor or of the man whose side was cut. But of the fruit of their labours some portion will go to that doctor and to his children after him if he chooses, with the money his victim pays him, to buy part of the stock of that railway company. An obscure writer, living perhaps in some remote corner of Wales, tells a story which catches the fancy of the ladies who subscribe to Mudie's library. He is able, because he has written feelingly of Evangelina's first kiss, to take to himself and assure to his heirs some part of the steel which sweating toilers make in Pittsburg, or, if that please him better, he can levy a toll upon the gold dug from a mine in South Africa. What do the Pittsburg steel workers know or care about him or Evangelina or the ladies who thrill over her caress? Why should they give up part of the fruit of their toil because an imaginary man is said to have kissed a girl who never existed? It is very difficult to explain it, but all society, all nations, peoples, and languages agree that they must. The whole force of humanity, com-

bined for this purpose only, agrees that the doctor, because of his knife, which has very likely killed its victim, and the novelist, because of his silly simpering heroine, shall have an indefeasible right to tax for their own private benefit almost any industry in the whole wide world. This is an unimaginable romance. So is all business ; but Memphis brought home the strangeness of it to me most compellingly.

Here is a dainty lady, fur-clad, scented, pacing with delicate steps across the floor of one of our huge shops. In front of her, not less exquisitely dressed, a handsome man bows low with the courtesy of a great lord of other days :

“Lingerie, madam, this way, if you please. The second turning to the left. *This* way, madam. Miss Jones, *if* you please. Madam wishes to see——”

And madam, with her insolent eyes, deigns to survey some frothy piles of frilly garments, touches, appraises the material, peers at the stitches of the hems, plucks at inserted strips of lace.

Here are broad acres of black, caked earth, and all across them are rows and rows of stunted bushes, like gooseberry bushes, but

thinner and much darker. On all their prickly branches hang little tufts of white fluff—cotton. Among the bushes go men, women, and children, black, negroes everyone of them, dressed in bright yellow, bright blue and flaming red. From their shoulders hang long sacks which trail on the ground behind them. They steadily pick, pick, pick the fluffs of cotton out of the opened pods, and push each little bit into a sack. There you have the beginning of all, the ending of part, of this wonderful substance which clothes, so they tell us, nine-tenths of the men and women who wear clothes at all. What is in between the dainty English lady and the negro in Tennessee ?

The plantation owner drives his mule along winding tracks through the fields where the bushes are, and watches. He is a man harassed by the insoluble negro problem, in constant dread of insect pests, oppressed by economic difficulties. Men in mills near by comb the thick seeds from the raw cotton, press it tight and bind it into huge bales. Men grade and sort the samples of it. Men shout at each other in great marts, buy and sell cotton yet unsorted, unpicked, ungrown ; and the record of their doings is flashed across continents



and oceans. Ships laden down to the limit of safety plunge through great seas with tired men on their bridges guiding them. In Lancashire, in Russia, in Austria, huge factories set their engines working and their wheels go whirling round. Men and women sweat at the machines. In Derry and a thousand other places women in gaunt bare rooms with sewing-machines, or in quiet chambers of French convents with needles in their hands, are working at long strips of cotton fabric. In shops, women again, officered by men, are selling countless different stuffs made out of this same cotton-fluff.

And the whole complex organisation, the last achieved result of man's age-long struggle for civilisation, works on the perilous verge of breaking down. The fine lady at the one end of it may buy what she cannot pay for and disturb the delicately balanced calculations of the shopkeeper. Some well-intentioned government somewhere may insist that the women who sew shall have fire and a share of the sunlight, things which cost money. Inspectors come, with pains and penalties ready in their pockets, and it seems possible that they will dislocate the whole machine. Labour, pain-

fully organised, suddenly claims a larger share of the profits which are flowing in. The wheels of all the factories stop whirling. Their stopping affects everyone through the whole length of the tremendous chain, alters the manner of life in the tiniest of the negroes' huts. A sanguine broker may speculate disastrously and the long chain of the organisation quivers through its entire length and threatens breaking. A shipowner raises rates, the servants of a railway company go on strike. Someone makes a blunder in estimating the size of a future crop. Negroes prove less satisfactory than usual as workers. The possibilities of a breakdown somewhere are almost uncountable. Yet somehow the thing works. It is a wonderful accomplishment of man that it should work and breakdown as seldom as it does ; but the dread of breakdown is present everywhere.

Everyone, the whole way from the lady who wants lingerie to the negro who picks at the bushes, is beset with anxiety. But, fortunately, no one ever feels more than his own immediate share of it. The cotton planter will indeed be affected seriously by an epidemic of speculation in New York, or a strike in

Lancashire, or the legislation of some well-meaning government. He knows all this, but it does not actually trouble him much. He has his own particular worry, and it is at him so constantly that it leaves all the other worries no time to get at him at all. His worry is the negro.

According to the theory of the American constitution the negro is a free man, a brother, as responsible as anyone else for the due ordering of the state. In actual practice the negro is either slowly emerging from the slave status or slowly sinking back to it again. It does not matter which way you look at it, the essential thing is, whichever way he is going, he is not yet settled down in either position. It is impossible—on account of the law—to treat him as a slave. It is impossible—on account of his nature, so I am told—to treat him as a free man. He is somewhere in between the two. He is economically difficult and socially undesirable. But he is the only means yet discovered of getting cotton picked. If anyone would invent a machine for picking cotton he would benefit the world at large immensely and make the cotton planter, save for the fear of certain insects, a happy man. But the

shape of the cotton bush renders it very difficult to get the cotton off it except by the use of the human finger and thumb. We are not nearly so clever at inventing things as we think we are. The cotton bush has so far defeated us. The negro, who supplies the finger and thumb, has very nearly defeated us too. It is hard to get him to work at all, and still harder to keep him at it. He does not seem to be responsive to the ordinary rules of political economy. If he can earn enough in one day to keep him for three days he sees no sense in working during the other two.

The southern American does not seem to be trying to solve this negro problem. He makes all sorts of makeshift arrangements, tries plans which may work this year and next year, but which plainly will not work for very many years. These seem the best he can do. Perhaps they are the best anyone could do. Perhaps it is always wisest to be content to keep things going and to let the remoter future take care of itself. The cotton crop has to be picked somehow this year, and it may have to be picked next year too. After that—well, nobody speculates in futures further ahead than that.

The problem of the social position of the negro seems to be quite as difficult to solve as that created by his indifference to the laws of political economy. The "man and brother" theory has broken down hopelessly, and the line drawn between the white and coloured parts of the population in the south is as well defined and distinct as any line can be. The stranger is told horrible tales of negro doings, and is convinced that the white men believe them by the precautions they take for the protection of women. There may be a good deal of exaggeration about these stories, and in any case the morality or immorality of the negro is not the most difficult element in the problem. Education, the steady enforcement of law, and the gradual pressure of civilisation will no doubt in time render outrages rarer. It is, at all events, possible to look forward hopefully. The real difficulty seems to me to lie in the strong, contemptuous dislike which white people who are brought into close contact with negroes almost invariably seem to feel for them. In the northern parts of America, where negroes form a very small part of the population, this feeling does not exist. A northern American or an Englishman would

not feel that he were insulted if he were asked to sit next a negro at a public banquet. A southern American would decline an invitation if he thought it likely that he would be called upon to do such a thing. A southern lady, who happened to be in New York, was offered by a polite stranger a seat in a street car next a negro. She indignantly refused to occupy it. The very offer was an outrage.

The feeling would be intelligible if it were the outcome of instinctive physical prejudice. An Englishwoman, who had hardly ever come into contact with a negro, once found herself seated at tea in the saloon of a steamer opposite a negress who was in charge of some white children. She found it impossible to help herself to cake from the dish from which the negress had helped herself. The idea of doing so filled her with a sense of sickness. Yet she did not feel herself insulted or outraged at being placed where she was. A southern American woman would have felt outraged. But the southern American woman has no instinctive shrinking from physical contact with black people. She is accustomed to it. She has at home a black cook who handles the food of the household, a black nurse who minds

the children, perhaps a black maid who performs for her all sorts of intimate acts of service. As servants she has no objection to negroes. There is in her nothing corresponding to the Englishwoman's instinctive shrinking from the touch of a black hand.

Nor is the southern American's contempt for the negroes anything at all analogous to the contempt which most people feel for those who are plainly their inferiors. A brave man has a thoroughly intelligible contempt for one who has shown himself to be a coward. But this is an entirely different thing, different in kind, not merely in degree, from a southern white man's contempt for a negro. It is the existence of this feeling, intensely strong and very difficult to explain, which makes the problem of the negro's social future seem hopeless of solution. No moral or intellectual advance which the negro can make affects this feeling in the slightest. It is not the brutalised negro or the ignorant negro, but the negro, whom the white man refuses to recognise as a possible equal.

Memphis, in spite of its negro problem, seems to me to be rapidly emerging from the ruins of one civilisation and to be pressing

forward to take a foremost place in another. I do not suppose that Memphis now regrets the past very much, or even thinks often of the terrible humiliation of the Civil War and the years of blank hopeless ruin which followed it. There was that indeed in the past which must have left indelible marks behind it. It was not easy for a proud people, essentially aristocratic in their outlook upon life, to accept defeat at the hands of men whom they looked down upon. It is not easy to forget the intolerable injustice which, inevitably I suppose, followed the defeat. But Memphis is looking forward and not back, is grasping at the possibilities of the future rather than brooding over the past.

But if Memphis and the south generally are content to forget the past, it does not follow that the past has forgotten them. The spirit of the older civilisation abides. It haunts the new life like some pathetic ghost, doomed to wander helplessly among people who no longer want to see it. There is a certain suavity about Memphis which the stranger feels directly he touches the life of the place. It is a lingering perfume, delicate, faint, but appreciable. I am told that it is to be traced to



Europe, that the business men in Europe have closer relations with England, Austria, and Russia than with the northern states of their own country. I am also told that we must look to the origin of it to the Cavalier settlers of the southern states, from whom the people who live there now claim descent. I do not like either explanation. A man does not catch suavity by doing business with Lancashire. The quality is not one on which the northern Englishman prides himself, or indeed which is very obvious in his way of living. The blood of those original Cavaliers, gentlemen all of them I am sure, must have got a good deal mixed in the course of the last two hundred years, especially as strangers are always pouring into the south. It must be an attenuated fluid now, scarcely capable of flavouring perceptibly a new and vigorous life. I prefer my own hypothesis of a ghost. Some of these creatures smell of sulphur and leave a reek of it behind them when they pay visits to their old homes on earth. Others betray their presence by the damp, cold, earthy air they bring with them from the tombs in which their bodies were laid. This Memphis ghost, which no one in Memphis sees but which yet

has its influence on Memphis' life, is of quite a different kind. It is scented with pot-pourri and the delicate rose-water which great ladies of bygone generations made and used. It is the ghost of some *grande dame*, like Madame Esmond, who owned slaves and used them with no misgiving about her right to do so, whose pride was very great, whose manners were dignified, whose ways among those of her own caste were exceedingly gracious. There is something, some lingering suggestion of great ladies about Memphis still, in spite of its new commercial prosperity. I think it must be because the spirits of them haunt the place.

Someone must surely have written a book on the philosophy of American place-names. The subject is an interesting one, and the world has a lot of authors in it. It cannot have escaped them all. But I have not seen the book. If I ever do see it I shall turn straight to the chapter which deals with Memphis and Cairo, for I very much want to know how those two places came to have Egypt for their godfather. Most American place-names are easy enough to understand, and they seem to me to surpass, in their fas-

cinating suggestion of romance, our old Irish and English names. It is, of course, interesting to know that all the chesters in England—Colchester, Dorchester, Manchester, and Chester itself—were once Roman camps; and that most of the Irish kils—Kilkenny, Kildare, Killaloe, Kilrush—were the churches of once honoured saints. But the Romans and the saints are very remote. They were important people in their day no doubt, but it is very hard to feel the personal touch of them now. American place-names bring us closer to men with whom we feel that we can sympathise. There is a whole range of names taken straight from old homes—Southampton, for instance, Boston, New Orleans. We do not need to go back in search of emotions to the original meaning of York or to worry over the derivation of Orleans. It is enough for us to feel that these names suggest all the pathetic nostalgia of exiles. The men who named these places must have been thinking of dearly loved church towers, of the streets and market places of country towns, whose every detail was well remembered and much regretted, of homes which they could scarcely hope to see again. It is not hard, either, to

catch the spirit of the Puritan settlers in theological and biblical names, in Philadelphia, Salem, and so forth. The men who gave these names to their new homes must have felt that, like Abraham, they had gone forth from their kindred and their people, from the familiar Ur of the Chaldees, to seek a country, to find that better city whose builder and maker is God. Philadelphia is perhaps to-day no more remarkable for the prevalence of brotherly love among its people than any other city is. But there were great thoughts in the minds of the men who named it first ; and reading the name to-day, even in a railway guide, our hearts are lifted up into some sort of communion with theirs. Then there are the Indian names, of lakes, mountains, and rivers chiefly, but occasionally of cities too. Chicago is a city with an Indian name. Perhaps these are of all the most suggestive of romance. It must have been the hunters and explorers, pioneers of the pioneers, who fixed these names. One imagines these men, hardened with intolerable toil, skilled in all the lore of wild life, brave, adventurous, picking up here and there a word or two of Indian speech, adopting Indian names for places which they had not time to name

themselves, handing on these strange syllables to those who came after them to settle and to build. Greater, so it seems, than the romance of the home-sick exile, greater than the romance of the Puritan with his Bible in his hand, is the wild adventurousness which comes blown to us across the years in these Indian names.

But there are names like Memphis which entirely baffle the imagination. It is almost impossible to think that the people who named that place were home-sick for Egypt. What would Copts be doing on the shores of the Mississippi? How could they have got there? Nor is it easy to think of any emotion which the name Memphis would be likely to stir in the mind of a settler. Memphis means nothing to most men. It is easy to see why there should be an American Rome. A man might never have been in Rome, might have no more than the barest smattering of its history, yet the name would suggest to him thoughts of imperial greatness. Anyone who admires imperial greatness would be inclined to call a new city Rome. But Memphis suggests nothing to most of us, and to the few is associated only with the worship of some long forsaken god. I can understand Indiana-

polis. There was Indiana to start with, a name which anyone with a taste for sonorous vowel sounds might easily make out of Indian. The Greek termination is natural enough. It gives a very desirable suggestion of classical culture to a scholar. But a scholar would be driven far afield indeed before he searched out Memphis for a name.

I asked several learned and thoughtful people how Memphis came by its name. I got no answer which was really satisfactory. It was suggested to me that cotton grows in Egypt and also in the neighbourhood of Memphis. But cotton does not immediately suggest Egypt to the mind. Mummies suggest Egypt. So, though less directly, does corn. If a cache of mummies had been discovered on the banks of the Mississippi it would be easy to account for Memphis. If Tennessee were a great wheat state, one could imagine settlers saying, "There is corn in Egypt, according to the Scriptures. Let us call our new city by an Egyptian name." But I doubt whether cotton suggested Memphis. It certainly did not suggest Cairo, for Cairo is not a cotton place. I was told—though without any strong conviction—that the sight of the Mississippi re-

minded somebody once of the Nile. It would of course remind an Egyptian fellah of the Nile; but the original settlers in Memphis were almost certainly not Egyptian fellaheen. Why should it remind anyone else of the Nile? It reminded me of the Shannon, and I should probably have wanted to call Memphis Athlone if I had had a voice in the naming of it. It would remind an Englishman of the Severn, a German of the Rhine, an Austrian of the Danube, a Spaniard—it was, I think, a Spaniard who went there first—of the Guadalquivir. I cannot believe that the sight of a very great river naturally suggests the Nile to anyone who is not familiar with Egypt beforehand.

It is indeed true that both the Mississippi and the Nile have a way of overflowing their banks, but most large rivers do that from time to time. The habit is not so peculiar as to force the thought of the Nile on early observers of the Mississippi. Indeed there is a great difference between the overflowings of the Nile and those of the Mississippi. The Nile, so I have always understood, fertilises the land round it when it overflows. The Mississippi destroys cotton crops when it breaks loose. South of Memphis for very many

miles the river is contained by large dykes, called levees, a word of French origin. These are built up far above the level of the land which they protect. It is a very strange thing to stand on one of these dykes and look down on one side at the roofs of the houses of the village, and on the other side, at the river. When we were there the river was very low. Long banks of sand pushed their backs up everywhere in the main stream, and there was half a mile of dry land between the river and the bank on which we stood. But at flood time the river comes right up to the dyke, rises along the slope of it, and the level of the water is far above that of the land which the dyke protects. Then the people in the villages near the dyke live in constant fear of inundation, and I saw, beside a house far inland, a boat moored—should I in such a case say tethered?—to a tree in a garden ready for use if the river swept away a dyke. I suppose the people get accustomed to living under such conditions. Men cultivate vines and make excellent wine on the slopes of Vesuvius though Pompeii lies, a bleached skeleton, at their feet. I should myself rather plant cotton behind a dyke, than do that. But I



am not nearly so much afraid of water as I am of fire.

I was told that at flood time men patrol the tops of the dykes with loaded rifles in their hands, ready to shoot at sight anyone who attempts to land from a boat. The idea is that unscrupulous people on the left bank, seeing that their own dyke is in danger of collapsing, might try to relieve the pressure on it by digging down a dyke on the right bank and inundating the country behind it. The people on the other side of course take similar precautions. Most men, such unfortunately is human nature, would undoubtedly prefer to see their neighbour's houses and fields flooded rather than their own. But I find it difficult to believe that anyone would be so entirely unscrupulous as to dig down a protecting dyke. The riflemen can scarcely be really necessary, but their existence witnesses to the greatness of the peril.

I saw, while I was in Memphis, a place where the river had torn a large piece of land out of the side of a public park. The park stood high above the river, and I looked down over the edge of a moderately lofty cliff at the marks of the river's violence. Some unexpected

obstacle or some unforeseen alteration in the river bed had sent the mighty current in full force against the land in this particular place. The result was the disappearance of a tract of ground and a semicircle of clay cliff, which looked as if it had been made with a gigantic cheese scoop. The river was placid enough when I saw it, a broad but lazy stream. But for the torn edge of the park I should have failed to realise how terrific its force can be. The dykes were convincing. So were the stories of the riflemen. But the other brought the reality home to me almost as well as if I had actually seen a flood.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LAND OF THE FREE

WE should have been hard indeed to please if we had not enjoyed our visits to Chicago and Memphis. We should be ungrateful now if we confessed that there was any note of disappointment in the memory of the joyous time we had. Yet there is one thing we regret about that journey of ours to the middle west and south. We should dearly have liked to see a dozen other places, smaller and less important, which lay along the railway line between Chicago and Memphis, and between Memphis and Indianapolis. We made the former of these journeys entirely, and the latter partly, by day. Some unimaginative friends warned us beforehand that these journeys were dull, that it would be better to sleep through them if possible, rather than spend hours looking out of railway carriage windows at uninteresting landscapes. These

friends were entirely wrong. The journeys were anything but dull. The trains dragged us through a whole series of small towns, and, after the manner of many American trains, gave us ample opportunity of looking at the houses and the streets.

In other countries trains are obliged to hide themselves as much as possible when they come to towns. They go into tunnels when they can or wander round the backs of mean houses, so that the traveller sees nothing except patches of half-bald earth sown with discarded tins, and rows of shirts and stockings hanging out to dry. European peoples, it appears, do not welcome trains. In America the train seems to be an honoured guest. It is allowed, perhaps invited, to wander along or across the chief streets. I have been told by a very angry critic that this way of stating the fact is wrong, misleading, and abominably unjust to the American people. The towns, he says, did not invite the train, but the train, being there first, so to speak, invited the towns to exist. Very likely this is so. But it seems to me to matter but little whether the train or the town came first. The noticeable thing is that the town evidently likes the train.

It is just as sure a mark of affection to lay out a main street alongside the railway line as it would be to invite the railway to run its line down the middle of the main street. An English town, if it found that a railway was established on its site before it got there, would angrily turn its back to the line, would, even at the cost of great inconvenience, run its streets away from the railway. The American plan, from the point of view of the passenger, is far better. He gets the most delightful glances of human activity and is set wondering at ways of life that are strange to him.

Our imagination would, I think, have in any case been equal to the task of conjuring up mental pictures of what life is like in these small isolated inland towns. We should, no doubt, have gone grievously wrong, but we should have enjoyed ourselves even without guidance. Fortunately we were not left to our own imaginative blunderings. We had with us a volume of Mr. Irvine Cobb's stories, for the possession of which we selfishly disputed. It gave us just what we wanted, a sure groundwork for our imaginings. We peopled those little towns with the men and women whom Mr. Cobb revealed to us. His humour

and his delightful tenderness gave us real glimpses of the lives, the hopes, the fears, the prejudices and memories of many people who otherwise would have been quite strange to us. Each little town as we came to it was inhabited by friendly men and women. Thanks to Mr. Cobb, they were our friends. All that was wanted was that we should be theirs. Hence the bitter disappointment at not being able to stop at one after the other of the towns, at being denied the chance of completing a friendship with people whom we already liked. But it may well be that we should not really have got to know them any better. We have not, alas ! Mr. Cobb's gift of gentle humour or his power of sympathetic understanding, also it takes years to get to know anyone, and we could not, in any case, have stayed for years in all these towns. Life has not years enough in it.

Besides the towns there were the people we met on the trains. There was, for instance, a man who went up and down selling apples and grapes in little paper bags. We bought from him, and while buying we heard him speak. There was no doubt about the matter. He was an Irishman, and not merely an Irish-

man by descent, the son or grandson of an emigrant, but one who had quite recently left Ireland. His voice, to our ears, was like well-remembered music. I know the feeling of joy which comes with landing from an English-manned steamer on the quay in Dublin and hearing again the Irish intonation and the Irish turns of phrase. But that is an expected pleasure. It is nothing compared to the sudden delight of hearing an Irish voice in some place thousands of miles from Ireland, where the last thing you expect to happen is a meeting with an Irishman. I remember being told of an Irishwoman who was travelling from Singapore to Ceylon in a steamer. She lay in her cabin, helplessly ill with some fever contracted during her stay in the far East. She seemed incapable of taking an interest in anything, until two men came to mend something in the corridor outside her cabin door. They talked together, and at the sound of their voices the sick lady roused herself. She had found something in life which still interested her. She wanted very much to know whether the men came from County Antrim or County Down. She was sure their homes were in one or the other. The Irish voices had stirred her.

We were neither sick nor apathetic, but we were roused to fresh vitality by the sound of our Irish apple-seller's voice. He came from County Wicklow. He told us so, needlessly indeed, for we knew it by his talk. He had been in America for two years, had drifted westwards from New York, was selling apples in a train. Did he like America? Was he happy? Was he doing well? And—crucial, test question—would he like to go back to Ireland?

“I would so, if there was any way I could get my living there.”

I suppose that is the way it is with the most of us. We have it fixed somehow in our minds that a living is easier got anywhere than at home. Perhaps it is. Yet surely apples might be sold in Ireland with as good a hope of profit as in Illinois or Tennessee. Baskets are cheap at home, and a basket is the sole outfit required for that trade. The apples themselves are as easy to come by in the one place as in the other. But possibly there are better openings in America. The profession may be overcrowded at home. Many professions are—medicine, for instance, and the law. Apple selling may be in the like case.



At all events, here was an Irishman, doing fairly well by his own account in the middle west of America, yet with a sincere desire to go back again to Ireland if only he could get a living there.

There was another man whom we met and talked to with great pleasure. Our train lingered, as trains sometimes will, for an hour or more at a junction. It was waiting for another train which ought to have met ours, but did not. We sat on the platform of the observation car, and gazed at the blinking signal lights, for the darkness had come. Suddenly a man climbed over the rail of the car and sat down beside us. He had, as we could see, a very dirty face, and very dirty hands. He wore clothes like those of an engine stoker. He was, I think, employed in shunting trains. He apologised for startling us, and expressed the hope that we had not mistaken him for a murderous Red Indian. He was a humorist, and he had seen at a glance that we were innocent strangers, the sort of people who might expect an American train to be held up by Red Indians with scalping-knives. He told us a long story about a lady who was walking from coach to coach of a train while he was

engaged in shunting it about and was detaching some coaches from it. She was crossing the bridge between two coaches at an unlucky moment and found herself suddenly on the line between two portions of the train. The expression of her face had greatly amused our friend. His account of the incident greatly amused us. But the most interesting thing about this man, the most interesting thing to us, was his unaffected friendliness. In England a signalman or a shunter would not climb into a train, sit down beside a passenger and chat to him. A miserable consciousness of class distinction would render this kind of intercourse as impossible on the one side as on the other. Neither the passenger nor the shunter would be comfortable, not even if the passenger were a Liberal politician or a newly made Liberal peer. In America this sense of class distinction does not seem to exist. I have heard English people complain that Americans are disrespectful. I should rather use the word unrespectful, if such a word existed. For disrespectful seems to imply that respect is somehow due, and I do not see why it should be. I am quite prepared to sign my assent to the democratic creed that one man

is as good as another. I even go further than most democrats and say that one man is generally better than the other, whenever it happens that I am the other. I see no reason why a railway signalman should not talk to me or to anyone else in the friendly tones of an equal, provided of course that he does not turn out to be a bore. It is a glory and not a shame of American society that it refuses to recognise class distinction.

My only complaint is that America has not gone far enough in the path of democratic equality. There are Americans who take tips. Now men neither take tips from nor give tips to their equals. If a friend were to slip sixpence into my hand when saying good-bye, I should resent it bitterly. Unless I were quite sure that he was either drunk or mad, I should feel that he was deliberately treating me as his inferior. I should admit that I was his inferior if I pocketed the tip. I should feel bound to touch my hat to him and say, "Thank you, sir," or "Much obliged to your honour." No man is in any way degraded by taking wages for the work he does, whatever that work may be, cleaning boots or lecturing in a University. But a man does lower himself when, in addition

to his wages, he accepts gifts of money from strangers. He is being paid then not for courtesy or civility, which he ought to show in any case, but for servility ; and that no one can render except to a recognised superior. The tip in a country where class distinctions are a regular part of the social order is right enough. It is, at all events, a natural outcome of the theory that some men by reason of their station in life are superior to others. In a social order which is based upon the principle of equality among men the tip has no proper place.

The distinction between tips and wages is a real one, although it is sometimes obscured by the fact that the wages of some kinds of work are paid entirely or almost entirely in the form of tips. A waiter in a restaurant or an hotel lives, I believe, mainly on tips. Tips are his wages. Nevertheless he places himself in a position of inferiority by allowing himself to be paid in this way. It is plain that this is so. There is a sharp line which divides those who are tipped from those who are not. It may, for instance, be the misfortune of anyone to require the services of a hospital nurse. But we do not tip her, however kind and attentive she may be. She gets her wages, her

salary, a fixed sum. It would be insulting to offer her, in addition, five shillings for herself. Hers is a profession which neither involves nor is supposed to involve any loss of self-respect. On the other hand, the chambermaid who makes the beds in an hotel is tipped. She expects it. And her profession, in the popular estimation at least, does involve a certain loss of self-respect. The best class of young women are unwilling to be domestic servants, but are not unwilling to be hospital nurses. Yet the hospital nurse works as hard as, if not harder, than a housemaid. She does the same kind of work. There is no real difference between making the bed of a man who is sick and making the bed of a man who is well. In either case it is a matter of handling sheets and blankets. But a suggestion of inferiority clings to the profession of a housemaid and none to that of a hospital nurse. The reason is that the one woman belongs to the class which takes tips, the other to the class which does not.

It is easy to see that in a country like America, into which immigrants are continually flowing from Europe, there is sure to be a large number of people—Italian waiters, for instance, and

Swedish or Irish domestic servants—who have not yet grasped the American theory of social equality. They have grown up in countries where the theory does not prevail. They naturally and inevitably expect and take tips, the largesse of their recognised superiors. No one accustomed to European life grudges them their tips. But there are, unfortunately, many American citizens, born and bred in America, with the American theory of equality in their minds, who also take tips, and are very much aggrieved if they do not get them. Yet they, by word and manner, are continually asserting their position of equality with those who tip them. This is where the American theory of equality between man and man breaks down. The driver of a taxi-cab, for instance, can have it one way or the other. He cannot have it both. He may, like a doctor, a lawyer or a plumber, take his regular fee, the sum marked down on the dial of his cab, and treat his passenger as an equal. Or he may take, as a tip, an extra twenty cents, in which case he sacrifices his equality and proclaims himself the inferior of the man who tips him, a member of a tippable class. There ought to be no tippable class of American citizens. The

English complaint of the disrespectfulness of Americans is, in my opinion, a foolish one, unless the American expects and takes tips. Then the complaint is well founded and just. The tipper pays for respectfulness when he gives a tip, and what he pays for he ought to get.

It is, I think, quite possible that the custom of tipping has something to do with the difficulty, so acute in America, of getting domestic servants. It is widely felt that domestic service in some way degrades the man or woman who engages in it. There is no real reason why it should. It is not in itself degrading to do things for other people, even to render intimate personal service to other people. The dentist who fills a tooth for me does something for me, renders me a special kind of personal service. He loses no self-respect by supplying me with a sound instrument for chewing food. Why should the person who cooks the food which that tooth will chew lose self-respect by doing so? There is no real distinction between these two kinds of service. Nor is there anything in the contention that the domestic servant is degraded by abrogating her own will and taking orders from someone else. Nine men

out of ten take orders from somebody. From the soldier on the battlefield, the most honourable of men, to the clerk in a bank, we are almost all of us obeying orders, doing not what we ourselves think best or pleasantest, but what someone in authority thinks right. What is the difference between obeying when you are told to clean a gun and obeying when you are told to wash a jug? The real reason why a suggestion of inferiority clings to the profession of domestic service is that domestic servants belong to the tippable class. Society can, if it likes, raise domestic service to a place among the honourable professions, by ceasing to tip and paying wages which do not require to be supplemented by tips. If this were done there would be far less difficulty in keeping up the supply of domestic servants.

I find myself on much more difficult ground when I pass on to discuss the impression made on me by the claim of America to be, in some special way, a free country.

"To the West! to the West! to the land of the free." So my farmer friend sang to me twenty years ago. The tradition survives. The American citizen believes that a man is freer in America than he is, for instance, in



England. If freedom means the power of the individual to do what he likes without being interfered with by laws, then no man can ever be quite free anywhere except on a desert island. I, as an individual, may earnestly desire to go out into a crowded thoroughfare and shoot at the street cars with a revolver. I am not free to do this in any civilised country in the world. For people with desires of that kind there is no such thing as liberty. The freedom of the individual is everywhere a compromise between his personal inclination and the general sense of the community. Men are more free where the community makes fewer laws, less free where the community makes more. In England I can, if I like, buy and drink at dinner a bottle of beer in the restaurant car of any train which has a restaurant car in any part of the country. In certain states in America I cannot buy a bottle of beer in the restaurant car of the train. There is a law which stops me. It may be a very good law. The infringement of my liberty which it entails may be for my good and the good of society in general ; but where that law exists I am certainly less free than where it does not exist.

The tendency of modern democratic states

is to make more and more laws, and thereby to confine within ever narrower limits the freedom of the individual man. A few years ago an Englishman could send his child to school or keep his child at home without any education, just as he chose. Now he must send his child to school. The law insists on it. The Irishman, in most parts of Ireland, can still, if he likes, allow his child to grow up without ever going to school. There is no law to interfere with him. In that particular respect Ireland is freer than England, for England has gone further along the path of curtailing individual liberty. In the matter of buying beer England is freer than America, because you can buy beer anywhere in England if you go to a house licensed to sell beer. In some parts of America there are no houses licensed to sell beer, and you cannot buy it. America has, in this particular respect, gone further than England along the path of curtailing individual liberty.

There are several other things about which there are laws in America which do not exist in England, and with regard to which America is not so free a country as England is. But there are also laws in England which do not exist in America. The Englishman is more or less

accustomed to his laws. He has got into the habit of obeying them, and they do not seem to interfere with his freedom. The American laws, to which he is not accustomed, strike him as unwarrantable examples of minor tyranny. But it is likely that the American is, in the same way, accustomed to his laws and is not irritated by them. He has got into the way of not wanting to buy beer in Texas, and does not feel that his liberty is curtailed by the existence of a law which it does not occur to him to break. He may be, on the other hand, profoundly annoyed by English laws, to which he is not accustomed. It may strike him, when he comes to England, that his liberty is being continually interfered with, just as an Englishman feels himself continually hampered in America. I can, for instance, understand that an American in England might feel that his liberty was most unwarrantably interfered with by the law which obliges him to have a penny stamp on every cheque he writes. It must strike him as monstrous that he cannot get his own money out of a bank without paying the government for being allowed to do so. After all it is his money, and the government is not even a banker. Why should he pay for taking a sovereign from the

little pile of sovereigns which his banker keeps for him when he would not have to pay for taking one out of a stocking if he adopted the old-fashioned plan of keeping his money there? The Englishman feels no annoyance at the payment of this penny. He is so entirely accustomed to it that it seems to him a violation of one of the laws of nature to write a cheque on a simple, unstamped piece of paper.

On the whole, although the citizens of both countries feel free enough when they are at home, there is probably less freedom, that is to say there are more laws, in America than in England. America is more thoroughly democratic in constitution than England is, and therefore less free. This seems a paradox, but is in reality a simple statement of obvious fact; nor is there any difficulty in seeing the reason for it. Democracies produce professional politicians. The professional politician differs from the amateur or voluntary politician exactly as any professional differs from any amateur. An amateur carpenter saws wood and hammers nails for the fun of the thing, and stops sawing and hammering as soon as sawing and hammering cease to amuse him. The professional carpenter must go on sawing and hammering

even if he does not want to, because it is in this way that he earns his bread. He therefore gets a great deal more sawing and hammering done in a year than any amateur does. It is the same with politicians. The amateur politician makes a law now and then when he feels like it. When law-making ceases to interest him he goes off to hunt or fish. The professional politician must go on making laws even though the business has become inexpressibly wearisome. Thus it is that in states where there are professional politicians, in democratic states, there are more laws, and therefore less freedom, than in states which only have amateur politicians. America, being slightly more democratic than England, has slightly more laws and slightly less freedom.

But it would be easy to make too much of this difference between England and America. The freedom which men value most is very little affected by laws. Laws neither give nor withhold it. Freedom is really an atmosphere in which we are able to breathe without anxiety or fear. There are some societies in which a man must be constantly watching himself lest he should give expression to a thought or an opinion which is liable to offend some powerful

interest or outrage some cherished conviction. All sorts of unpleasant consequences follow incautious utterance of an unpopular opinion, or even the discovery that unpopular opinions are held. It may be that the rash individual is looked on very coldly. It may be that those who seem to be his friends gradually draw away from him. It may be—this is not so unpleasant but quite unpleasant enough—that he is assailed in newspapers and held up in their columns to public odium. It may be that he is made to suffer in more material ways, that he loses business or runs the risk of being deprived of some position which he holds. In very uncivilised communities he is sometimes actually treated with physical violence. The windows of his house are broken or he is mobbed. The dread of some or all of these penalties makes him very cautious. He goes through life glancing timidly from side to side, always anxious, always a little frightened, and therefore—since fear is the real antithesis of liberty—never free.

All communities suffer from spasmodic fits of this kind of intolerance. In England in the year 1900 it was not safe to be a pro-Boer, and England at that time was not a free country.

England is now free to quite an extraordinary extent. A man may hold and express almost any conceivable opinion without suffering for it. He can stand up in a public assembly and say hard things about England herself, point out her faults in plain and even bitter language. The English people as a whole remain totally indifferent to what he says about them. If the hard thing is said wittily they laugh. If it is said dully they yawn. In neither case do they display any signs of anger. They succeed in giving the stranger in their midst the impression that nothing he does or says matters in the least so long as he avoids crossing the indefinable line which separates "good form" from bad. His manners may get him into trouble. His opinions will not.

America is free too in this same way, but is not, I think, so free as England. There are several subjects about which it is not wise to talk quite freely in America. The ordinary middle-class American, the man with whom one falls into casual conversation in a train, is sensitive about criticism of his country and its institutions in a way that the ordinary Englishman is not. It may very well be that in this he is the Englishman's superior. A perfectly

detached judge of humanity—some epicurean deity observing all things with passionless calm, and weighing all emotion in the scales of absolute justice—might, quite conceivably, rank a slightly resentful patriotism higher than tolerant apathy. We Irishmen are not tolerant of criticism, and I sincerely hope that ours is the better part. We do not like the expression of opinions which differ from our own, and are inclined to suppress them with some violence when we can. As a nation we value truth far more than liberty ; truth being, of course, the thing which we ourselves believe ; obviously that, for we would not believe it unless we were quite sure that it was true. Americans are not so whole-hearted as we are in this matter. The more highly-educated Americans are even inclined to drift into a tolerant agnosticism which is almost English. But most Americans are still a little intolerant of strange opinions and still have enough conscious patriotism to resent criticism.

It is the fault of a great quality. No society can be both enthusiastic and free. It is the tips and the equality over again. We cannot have things both ways. If society allows a man, without pain or penalty, to say exactly



what he means, it is always because that society is convinced, deep down in its soul, that he cannot possibly mean what he says. A man is free to speak what he chooses, to criticise, to abuse, to sneer, wherever his fellow-men have made up their minds that it does not matter what he says, how keenly he criticises, abuses, or sneers. On the other hand a society which is very much in earnest about anything—and a great many Americans are—will not suffer differences of opinion patiently, and will always be resentful of criticism. Say to an Englishman that American football is superior to the Rugby Union game. He will look at you with a sleepy expression in his eyes, and after a short pause, politeness requiring some answer from him, he will say : “ Is it really ? ” His tone suggests that he does not care whether it is or not, but that he means to go on playing the Rugby Union game if he plays at all, a point about which he has not quite made up his mind. Say to an American that Rugby Union football is superior to his game and he will look at you with highly alert but slightly troubled eyes. He wants to respect you if he can, and he does not like to hear you saying a thing which cannot possibly be true. But he too is polite.

“There may be,” he says, “some points of superiority about the English game—but, on the whole—think of the organisation of our forwards. Think of the amount of thought required. Think of the rapid decisions which have to be made. Think of— But come and see the match next Saturday and then you’ll understand.”

There is still another kind of freedom ; freedom to behave as we like, freedom of manners. This is almost as important as freedom to speak and think without fear of consequences. Indeed for most people it is more important. Only a few of us think, or want to say what we think. All of us have to behave, to have manners of some sort either good or bad. It is curious to notice that while men everywhere are acquiescing without much protest to the curtailment of the sort of freedom which is affected by law, they are steadily claiming and securing more and more freedom of manners. We are far less bound by conventions than we used to be. There was a time when everybody possessed, and once a week wore, what were called “Sunday clothes.” One hardly ever hears the phrase now, and men go to church in coats which would have struck their grand-

mothers as distinctly unsuited to a place of worship. Sunday clothes were a bondage, and we have broken free. There was, very long ago, a definite code of manners binding upon men and women when they met together. When it prevailed the intercourse between the sexes must have been singularly stiff and uncomfortable. There were many things which a woman could not do without losing her character for womanliness, and many things which a man could not do in the company of ladies—smoke, for instance.

It is, I think, women and not men who decide how much of this sort of liberty people are to enjoy. If I am right about this, then American women are more generous than English women. There is much more freedom in the matter of clothes in America than in England. I remember hearing an Englishwoman complain that no matter how she tried she never could succeed in dressing correctly in America. In England she knew exactly the kind of gown to wear at an afternoon party, at a small dinner, at a large dinner, at an evening reception, in the box of a theatre. In America she perpetually found herself wearing the wrong thing. I imagine that in reality she did not wear the

*wrong* thing, because there is no such rigid standard of appropriateness of dress in America as there is in England. More latitude is allowed, and if a gown is hardly ever correct, it is also hardly ever wrong. Every man who sits in the stalls of a London theatre must display eighteen inches of white shirt above the top button of his waistcoat. In America he may wear a blue flannel shirt if he likes, and nobody cares whether it is visible beneath his tie or not. In England a man who dines in a very smart restaurant must wear a tail coat and a white tie. In America he can, if he chooses, wear a tail coat and a black tie, or a short coat and a white tie. There is no fixed rule determining the connection between coats and ties.

It is not only the class of people who dine in smart restaurants and sit in stalls of theatres which is subject to rules of this kind. Every class has its own conventions, and, so far as my observation goes, every class is a little freer in America than it is in England. No English chauffeur with any self-respect would consent to drive a motor-car about London unless he were wearing some kind of uniform. In America the most magnificent cars are frequently driven by chauffeurs in

grey tweed suits with ordinary caps on their heads.

I am nearly sure that it is women, the women of our own class, who decide what clothes we shall wear and what clothes they will wear themselves. I am quite sure that it is they who regulate the degree of formal stiffness there is to be in our intercourse with them. English women have, to a very considerable extent, given up requiring from men those symbols of respect which had long ago ceased to be anything but the mere conventional survivals of the mediæval idea of chivalry. Men and women in England meet on friendlier and more equal terms than they used to. American women have gone even further than the English in setting themselves and us free from the old restrictions. They invite comradeship, and have, as far as possible, swept away the barriers to free intercourse between sex and sex.

To some people liberty of any sort, liberty for its own sake, will always seem a desirable thing. These will prefer the manners of America to those of England, but will cling to their admiration of the Englishman's tolerance of criticism. There are others—it is a matter

of temperament—who prefer restraint, who like to talk cautiously, who cling to social conventions. To them it will be a comfort to know that in one respect the American woman is not so free as her English sister. In England a woman may, without loss of reputation, smoke almost anywhere, anywhere that men smoke, except in the streets and the entrance halls of theatres. In New York there are only two or three restaurants in which a woman is allowed to smoke. Even if she is indifferent to her reputation and does not mind being considered fast she cannot smoke in the other restaurants. The head waiter comes and stops her if she tries. This may be quite right. I do not know whether it is or not. Many very strong arguments may be and are brought against women smoking. It is, I am thankful to say, no business of mine to weigh them against the other arguments which go to show that women are as well entitled to the solace of tobacco as men are. What interests me far more than the arguments on either side is the fact that American women are in this one respect much less free than English women. The women of both nations smoke, but the American woman must do it in privacy

or semi-privacy. The Englishwoman inhales her cigarette with untroubled enjoyment in any restaurant in London. She must dress herself strictly as convention prescribes for each occasion. She must be a little careful in her intercourse with men. She has not yet got a vote. But she may smoke. The American woman has much more freedom in the matter of clothes. She can be as friendly with a man as she likes. In several states she has a vote. But society in general frowns on her smoking, and sets its policeman, the head waiter, to prevent her doing it. I should myself prefer a cigarette to a vote ; but I am fond of tobacco and all elections bore me, so I am not an unprejudiced judge. American women may be in this matter, as indeed they certainly are in other matters, nobler than I am. They may gladly sacrifice tobacco for the sake of the franchise, but I do not see why they should not have both.

## CHAPTER IX

### WOMAN IN THE STATES

THERE is a story told about Lord Beaconsfield which, if true, goes to show that he was not nearly so astute a man as is generally supposed. A lady, an ardent advocate of Woman Suffrage, once called on him and tried to convince him of the justice of her cause. She was a very pretty lady, and she spoke with great enthusiasm. One imagines flashing eyes, heightened colour, graceful gestures of the hands. Lord Beaconsfield listened to her and looked at her. When she had finished speaking he said: "You darling!" The lady, we are told, was angry, thinking that she had been insulted. She was perfectly right. The remark, which might under other circumstances have been received with blushing satisfaction, was just then and there a piece of intolerable rudeness. It was stupid besides. But perhaps the great statesman meant to be



rude. Perhaps, on the other hand, he was carried away for the moment and ceased to be intelligent. Perhaps the whole story was invented by some malicious person and is entirely without foundation. In any case it is a serious warning to the man who sits down to write about American women. It makes him hesitate, fearfully, before venturing to say the very first thing he must want to say. But he who writes takes his life in his hands. I should be little better than a poltroon if I shrank from uttering the truth.

I was asked by an able and influential editor in New York to write an article on American Women. It is not every day that I am thus invited to write articles, so I take a pardonable pride in mentioning the request of this American editor. It was after dinner that he asked me, and a lady, who was with us, heard him do it. I looked at her before I answered. If she had scowled or even frowned I should not now be writing about American women. She encouraged me with a nod and a smile. Yet she knew—she must have known—what I should write first of all. Upon her head be at least part of the blame. She not merely smiled. She went on to persuade me to

write the article. By persuading me she helped to make me quite certain that what I am writing is true.

The American woman is singularly charming.

Is this an insult? I think of the many American women whom I met who were kind enough to talk to me, and I know that this is not what they would like to have written about them. Some of them were very earnest, knights-errant, who rode about redressing human wrongs. It happens occasionally—not often, of course, but very occasionally—that women with causes are not charming. They are inclined to over-emphasize their causes, to keep on hammering at a possible convert, to become just a little tiresome. This is, as far as I could judge, never the case with the American ladies who have causes. Others whom I met were learned and knew all about philosophies dim to me. Others again were highly cultured. I am an ignorant and stupid man. Very clever women sometimes frighten me. I was never frightened in America. Others again, without being learned or particularly cultured, were brilliant. They were all charming. That is the truth. I have written it, and if the skies come tumbling indignantly about my ears

they just must tumble. "Impavidum ferient ruinae"; but I hope nothing so bad as that will happen to me.

There are people in the world who believe that we are born again and again, rising or sinking in the scale of living things at each successive incarnation according as we behave ourselves well or badly in our present state. If this creed were true I should try very hard indeed to be good, because I should want, next time I am born, to be an American woman. She seems to me to have a better kind of life than the woman of any other nation, or indeed than anybody else, man or woman. She is, as I hope I have suggested, more free than her European sister. "So full of burrs," said a great lady of old times, "is this workaday world, that our very petticoats will catch them." This is a true estimate of the position of the European woman. They who wear petticoats over here must walk warily with chaperons beside them. But in America there are either fewer burrs or petticoats are made of some better material. The American woman, even when she is quite young, can go freely enough and no scandalous suggestions attach to her unless she does

something very outrageous. She has in other ways too a far better time than the English woman. American social life seems to me—the word is one to apologise for—gynocentric. It is arranged with a view to the convenience and delight of women. Men come in where and how they can. The late Mr. Price Collier observed this, and drew from it the deduction that the Englishman tends on the whole to be more efficient than the American, everything in an English home being sacrificed to his good. That may or may not be true; but I think the American woman is certainly more her own mistress than the Englishwoman, just because America does its best for women and only its second best for men.

I do not pretend to be superior to these advantages. I like a good time as well as anyone. But I have other ambitions. And I do not want to be an American woman only for the sake of material gains. She seems to me to deserve her good luck because she has done her business in life exceedingly well, better on the whole than the American man has done his.

I am—I wish to make this clear at once—a good feminist. No man is less inclined than

I am to endorse the words of the German Emperor and confine woman's activities to "Kirche, Küche und Kinder." I would, if I had my way, give every woman a vote. I would invite her to discuss the most intricate political problems, with a full confidence that she could not possibly make a worse muddle of them than our male politicians do. I should like to see her conducting great businesses, doctoring her neighbours, pleading for them in law courts, driving railway engines, and, if she wanted to, carrying a rifle or steering a submarine. I would place woman in every possible way on an equality with man and confine her with no restriction except those with which she voluntarily impedes her own activities, like petticoats, stays and blouses which hook up the back. Having made this full confession of faith I shall not, I hope, be reproached for appearing to recognise a distinction between woman's business in life, the thing which the American woman has done very well, and man's business, which the American man seems to me to have managed rather badly. Strictly speaking, in the ideal state, all public affairs are women's just as much as men's. Strictly speaking, again in

the ideal state, man is just as responsible as woman for the arts of domestic life. But we are not yet living in the ideal state, and for a long while now the household has been recognised as woman's sphere, while man has resented her interference with anything outside the circle of social and family life.

It is in these matters which have been entrusted to her that the American woman has shown herself superior to the American man. I admit, of course, that the American man has done a great many things very brilliantly. But he does not seem to me to have succeeded in making the business of living, so far as it falls within his province, either comfortable or agreeable. The Englishman has done better. Examples of what I mean absolutely crowd upon me. Take the question of cooking food. The American man, left to his own devices, is not strikingly successful with food. The highest average of cooking in England is to be found in good men's clubs. You may, and often do, get excellent dinners in private houses in England; but you are surer of an excellent dinner in a first-rate club. In America it is the other way about. Many men's clubs have skilful cooks, but you are

on the whole more likely to get very good food in a woman's club or in a private house than in a man's club. I am not myself an expert in cooked food. The subject has never had a real fascination for me. But I have a sense of taste, like my better educated gourmet brethren, and I am convinced that where the American woman has control of the cooking the business is better done than it generally is in England, and far better done than when it is left to American men.

The kindred subject of drinks, again, marks the superiority of the American woman. For some reason, quite obscure to me, women are not supposed to know anything about wine. They either do not like it at all, or they like bad kinds of wine. Wine is man's business in all countries. In America wine is dear, and usually of indifferent quality. Man has mismanaged the cellar. On the other hand women are supposed—again the reason is beyond me—to like eating sweets, to be specialists in that whole range of food which in America goes under the name of candies. Men have not created the demand for candies or secured the supply. They are woman's affair. The consequence is that American

candies are better than any others in the world, better even than the French. It is necessary to search New York narrowly and patiently in order to find a good bottle of claret. I speak on this matter as an outsider, but I am assured by highly skilled experts that the fact is as I state it. On the other hand—I know this by experience—you can satisfy your soul with an almost infinite variety of chocolates without going three hundred yards from the door of your hotel in New York or Philadelphia.

The one form of alcoholic drink in which America surpasses the rest of the world is the cocktail. I have never yet seen a properly written history of cocktails. The subject still waits its philosopher. But I am inclined to think that the cocktail, the original of the species, Manhattan, Bronx, or whatever it may have been, was invented by a woman. True, these drinks are now universally mixed by men. But the inspiration is unquestionably feminine. Formulæ for the making of cocktails exist. I was once asked to review a book which contained several hundred receipts for cocktails. But everyone agrees that the formula is of minor importance. The cocktail depends for



its excellence not on careful measurements, but on the incalculable and indescribable thing called personality. The most skilful pharmaceutical chemist, trained all his life to the accurate weighing of scruples and measurement of drachms, might well fail as a maker of cocktails. He would fail if he did not possess an instinct for the art. Now this is characteristic of all women's work. Man reaches his conclusions by argument, bases his convictions on reason, and is generally wrong. Woman responds to emotion, follows instinct, and is very often right. Man is the drudging scientist, patient, dull. Woman is the dashing empiricist, inconsequential, brilliant. The cocktail must be hers. I shall continue, until strong evidence to the contrary is offered to me, to believe that the credit for this glory of American life belongs to her and not to man.

It would, no doubt, be insulting to say that part of the business of a woman, as distinguished from a man, is to dress well and be agreeable. I should not dream of saying such a thing. But there can be no harm in suggesting that it is the duty of both sexes to do these things. There is no real reason why

an idealist, man or woman, should not be pleasant to look at, nor is it necessary that very estimable people should administer snubs to the rest of us. It seems to me that even very good people are better when they have nice manners and pleasanter when they dress well. It is not, I admit, their fault when they are not good-looking, but it is their fault if they do not, by means of clothes, make themselves as good-looking as they can. There is no excuse for the man or woman who emphasizes a natural ugliness. Man, I regret to say, does not often recognise his duty in these matters. Woman, generally speaking, has done her best. The American woman has made the very most of her opportunities, and has succeeded both in looking nice and in being an agreeable companion. In the art of putting on her clothes she has no superior except the Parisienne, and even in Paris itself it is often difficult to tell, without hearing her speak, whether the lady at the next table in a restaurant is French or American. I knew an English mother who sent her daughter to Paris for six months in order that the girl might learn to dress herself. The journey to America would have been longer, but once there the girl

would have had just as good a chance of acquiring the art. I am very unskilful in describing clothes, and the finer nuances of costume are far beyond the power of any language at my command to express. But it is possible to appreciate effects without being able to analyse the way in which they are produced. The effect on the emotions of a symphony rendered by a good orchestra is almost as great for the man who does not know exactly what the trombones are doing as it is for the musician who understands that they are adding to the general noise by playing chromatic scales or whatever it is that trombones do play. It is the same with clothes. I cannot name materials, or discuss styles in technical language, but I am pleasantly conscious that the American woman has the air of being very well dressed.

I am not attempting to make a comparison between the clothes of very wealthy women of the leisured classes in America and those of women similarly placed in other countries. Aristocracies and plutocracies are cosmopolitan. National characteristics are to a considerable extent smoothed off them. The women of these classes dress almost equally.

well everywhere. The possibility of comparison exists only when one considers the comparatively poor women of the middle and lower middle classes. It is these who, in America, have the instinct for dressing well unusually highly developed. Some women have this instinct. Others have not. It seems to be distributed geographically. There are cities—no bribe would induce me to name one of them—where the women are usually badly dressed. You walk up and down the chief thoroughfares. You enter the most fashionable restaurants and are oppressed by a sense of prevailing dowdiness. It is not a question of money. The gowns which you see, the coats, the hats have obviously cost great sums. For half the expenditure women in other places look well dressed. It is not a matter of the skill of dressmakers and milliners. A woman who has not got the instinct for clothes might go to—I forget the man's name, but he is the chief costumier in Paris—might give him a free hand to do his best for her, and afterwards she would not look a bit better dressed. It is not, I believe, possible to explain exactly what she lacks. It is an extra sense, as incommunicable as an ear for music.

A woman either has it or has not. The American woman has it.

I know—no one knows better than I do—that it is a contemptible thing to take any notice of clothes. The soul is what matters. The body may be in rags. The mind is what counts, and fine feathers do not make fine birds. A great prophet would not be the less a great prophet though his finger nails were black. I hope we should all adore him just the same even if he never washed his face or wore a collar. But just at first, before we got to know him really well, it is possible that we might be a little prejudiced against him if he looked as if he never washed. That is all I wish or mean to say about the American woman's power of dressing herself. It disarms prejudice. The stranger starts fair, so to speak, when he is introduced to her. In the case of women who cannot, or for any reason will not dress themselves nicely, there are preliminary difficulties in the way of appreciating their real worth.

But the best clothes in the world are no help when it comes to conversation, unless indeed one is able to discuss them in detail, and I am not. I have met exquisitely dressed

women who were very difficult to talk to. The American woman is not one of these. Besides being well dressed she is a delightful talker on all subjects. She may or may not be profound. I am not profound myself, so I have no way of judging about that. But profoundness is not wanted in conversation. Its proper place is in scientific books. In conversation it is merely a nuisance, and the American woman, when she is profound, has more sense than to show it. She talks well because she is not in the least shy or self-conscious. Even young American girls are not shy. Brought into sudden contact with a middle-aged man they treat him as an equal, with a frank sense of comradeship. They have, apparently, no awe of advanced or advancing years. They do not pretend to think that elderly people are in any way their superiors, or display in the presence of the aged that kind of chilling aloofness which is called respect. I detest people who behave as if they respected me because I am older than they are. I recognise at once that they are hypocrites. Boys and girls must know, in their hearts, just as well as we do, that respect is due to the young from the elderly and not the other

way about. The ancient Romans understood this : “ *Maxima debetur pueris reverentia* ” is in the Latin grammar, and Latin grammar is a good authority on all subjects connected with ancient Roman civilisation.

It is her power of making herself agreeable which is the greatest charm of the American woman, a greater charm than her ability in dressing. I am a man very little practised in the art of conversation. A dinner party—a party of any kind, but particularly a dinner party—is a thing from which I shrink. I am always very sorry for the two women who are placed beside me. I know that they will have to make great exertions to keep up a conversation with me. I watch them suffering and am myself a prey to excruciating pangs of self-reproach. But my agony is less in America than elsewhere. The American woman must, of course, suffer as much as the Englishwoman when I take her in to dinner ; but she possesses in an extraordinary degree the art of not showing it. She frequently deceives me for several minutes at a time, making me think that she is actually enjoying herself. She is able to do this because she has an amazing vitality and a very acute kind of intelligence. Now the

highest compliment which a woman can pay to a man is to enjoy his company. The American woman understands this, and succeeds in pretending she is doing it. She is wise too. Recognising that even her powers have their limits, and that no woman however vital and intelligent can go on disguising her weariness for very long, she makes her dinners and luncheons as short as possible, shorter than similar functions are in England. She does not attempt anything in the way of a long-distance contest with the heavy stupidity of the ordinary man. Hers is the triumph of the sprinter. For a short time she flashes, sympathises, subtly flatters, talks with amazing brilliance, charms. Then she escapes. What happens to her next I can only guess ; but I imagine that she must be very much exhausted.



## CHAPTER X

### MEN AND HUSBANDS

COMIC papers on both sides of the Atlantic have adopted the marriages between American women and English men of the upper classes as a standing joke, one of those jokes of which the public never gets tired, whose infinite variety repetition does not stale. The fun lies in the idea of barter. The Englishman has a title. The American woman has dollars. He lays a coronet at her feet. She hands money bags to him. Essentially the joke is the same on whichever side of the Atlantic it is made. But there is a slight difference in the way the parts of it are emphasized. The tendency among American humorists is to dwell a little on the greed of the Englishman, who is represented as incapable of earning money for himself. The English jester lays more stress on the American woman's desire to be called "my lady," and pokes fun at the true demo-

crat's fondness for titles. I appreciate the joke thoroughly wherever it is made, and I invariably laugh heartily at it. But I decline to take it as anything more than a joke. It is not a precise and scientific explanation of fact.

There are a great many marriages between American women of large or moderate fortune and English men, or other Europeans of title. That is the fact. No doubt the dollars are as attractive to noblemen as they are to anybody else. There are a number of pleasant things, steam yachts, for instance, which can be got by those who have dollars, but not by those who are without them. They may occasionally be the determining factor in the choice of a wife. But I feel sure that most Englishmen, when they marry American women, do so because they like them. They marry the woman, not the money. In the same way a title is a very pleasant thing to have. I have never enjoyed the sensation and never shall, but I know that it must be most agreeable to be styled "Your Grace," and to have a coronet embroidered on a pocket handkerchief. But I do not believe that American women marry coronets. They marry men. The coronet

counts, I daresay, but the man counts more.

It is interesting to notice that, although there are many marriages between American women and English men, there are comparatively few marriages between English women and American men. If it were a mere question of exchanging money for titles we might expect English women of title to marry American men. There are a great many English women with titles and a great many rich American men. They might marry each other but they do not, not, at all events, in large numbers. It is true that the woman cannot, unless she is a princess, give her husband a title, as a man can give a title to his wife. But it is no small thing to have a wife with a title. It is a pleasure well worth buying, if it is to be bought. But apparently it is not. The English woman of title prefers to marry an English man, however rich Americans may be. The American man prefers American women, though none of them have titles. Exact statistics about these marriages are not available, but we may take the vitality of current jokes as an indication of what the facts are. The joke about the marriage between Miss

Sadie K. Bock, daughter of the well-known dollar dictator of Capernaum, Pa., U.S.A., and the Viscount Fitzeffingham-Plantagenet, is fresh and always popular. But no one ever made a joke about a marriage between the dollar dictator's son and Lady Ermyntrude. There would be no point in that joke if it were made, because the thing does not happen, or does not happen often enough to strike the popular imagination.

The truth appears to be that American women, apart from any question of their dowries, are attractive both to English and American men. English men, on the other hand, are attractive both to English and American women.

I occupy in this investigation the position of an unprejudiced outsider. I am neither English nor American, but Irish, and I can afford to discuss the matter without passion, since Irish women are admittedly more attractive than any others in the world, and Irish men are seldom tempted to marry outside their own people. A very wise English lady, one who has much experience of life, once said that young Englishmen of good position are lured into marrying music-hall

dancers, a thing which occasionally happens to them, because they find these ladies more entertaining and exciting than girls of their own class. I do not know whether this is true or not, but if it is it helps to explain the attractiveness of American women. There is always a certain unexpectedness about them. They are always stimulating and agreeable. It is much more difficult to account for the attractiveness of the English man.

The manners of a well-bred Englishman are not superior to those of a well-bred American man. Nor are they inferior. Looked at superficially they are the same. As far as mere conventional behaviour towards women is concerned there is no difference between an Englishman and an American. A well-mannered Englishman rises up and opens the door for a woman when she leaves the room. So does a well-mannered American. The Englishman hands tea, bread and butter or cake to a woman before he takes tea, bread and butter or cake for himself. So does the American. The outward acts are identical. But there is a subtle difference in the spirit which inspires them. The Englishman does these things because he is chivalrous. His

manners are based on the theory "Noblesse oblige." The woman belongs to the weaker sex, he to the stronger. All courtesy is therefore due to her. This is the theory which underlies the behaviour of Englishmen to women. Good manners are a survival, one of the few survivals, of the old idea of chivalry; and chivalry was the nobly conceived homage of the strong to the weak, of the superior to the inferior. The American, performing exactly the same outward acts, is reverent. And reverence is essentially the opposite of chivalry. It is not the homage of the strong to the weak, but the obeisance of the inferior in the presence of a superior.

This difference of spirit underlies the whole relationship of men to women in England and America. It helps to explain the fact that the feminist movement in England is much fiercer than it is in America. The English feminist is up against chivalry and wants equality. The American woman, though she may claim rights, has no inducement to destroy reverence.

I should be very sorry to think, I should be mad to say, that this difference in spirit has anything to do with the attractiveness of

English men, considered not as temporary companions, but as husbands. But there are, or once were, people who held the theory that the natural woman—and all women are perhaps more or less natural—prefers as a husband the kind of man who asserts himself as her superior. "O. Henry" has a story of a woman who learned to respect and love her husband only after she had goaded him into beating her. Up to that point she had despised him thoroughly. Other novelists, deep students of human nature all of them, have worked on the same scheme. They are quite wrong, of course. But if they were right they might quote the Englishman's invincible chivalry as the reason of his attractiveness, maintaining, cynically, that a woman prefers, in a husband, that kind of homage to the reverence that the American man continually offers her.

The American man strikes me as more alert than the Englishman. If this were noticeable only in New York I should attribute the alertness to the climate. The air of New York is extraordinarily stimulating. The stranger feels himself tireless, as if he could go on doing things of an exhausting kind all day long

without intervals for rest. It would be small wonder if the natives of the place were eager beyond other men. But they are not more eager and alert than other Americans. Therefore we cannot blame or thank the climate for these qualities. They must depend upon some peculiarity of the American nervous system, unless, indeed, they are the result of living under the American constitution. A man would naturally feel it his duty to be as alert as he could if he felt that his country was pre-eminently the land of progress, and that all the other countries in the world were more or less old-fashioned and effete. But wherever the alertness comes from it is certainly one of the characteristics of the American man.

With it goes sanguineness. Every man who undertakes any enterprise looks at it from two points of view. He thinks how very nice life will be if the enterprise succeeds. He also considers how disagreeable things will become if, for any reason, it fails to come off. The Englishman, unless he is a politician, is temperamentally inclined to give full weight to the possibility of failure. The American dwells rather on the prospects of success.



There are, of course, a great many sanguine Englishmen. Most members of Parliament, for instance, must be extraordinarily hopeful, otherwise they would not go on expecting to get things done by voting and listening to speeches. Some Americans, though not many, are cautious to the point of being almost pessimistic. But broadly speaking, Americans are more sanguine than Englishmen. That is why so many new faiths, and new foods, come from America. Only a very hopeful people could have invented Christian Science or expect to be benefited by eating "Grape Nuts" at breakfast time. That is also, I imagine, why Americans drink so much iced water. Conscious of the dangers of being too sanguine, they try to cool down their spirits in the way which is generally recognised as best for reducing excessive hopefulness. To pour cold water on anything is a proverbial expression. The Americans pour gallons of very cold water down their throats, which shows that they are on the watch against the defects of their high qualities.

With the alertness and hopefulness there goes, inevitably, a certain restlessness. "Better the devil you know than the devil you don't"

is a proverb which appeals to the Englishman. It could never be popular in America. The American, if he made up his mind to go in for the acquaintance of devils at all, would be inclined to try the newer kinds, not merely because he would be hopeful about them, but because he would feel sure that the old ones would bore him. He would never settle down to a monotonous cat and dog life with a thoroughly familiar devil. The Englishman prefers to remain where he is unless the odds are in favour of a change being a change for the better. The American will make a change unless he thinks it likely to be a change for the worse.

We were greatly struck while we were in America by the fact that there were very few gardens there. The season of the year, late autumn, was not indeed favourable to gardens. Still I think we should have recognised flower beds and the remains of flowers if we had seen them. At first we were inclined to think that Americans do not care for flowers ; but we were constantly assured, on unimpeachable authority, that they do. And we were not dependent on mere assertion. We saw that Americans adorn their rooms with cut flowers, sometimes

at huge expense. They must, therefore, like flowers. They also, we were told, like growing them ; but, as a matter of fact, they do not grow them to anything like the same extent that flowers are grown in England or Ireland. We used to ask why people who like flowers and would like to grow them have so few gardens. We got several answers. The climate, of course, was one. But it is not fair to make the climate responsible for too many things. Besides the climate, as I have said before, is not the same all over America. It is difficult to believe that it is everywhere fatal to gardening.

Another answer—a much more satisfactory one—was that it takes time to create a garden, and Americans do not usually stay long enough in one house to make it worth while to start gardening. It is plainly an unsatisfactory thing to inaugurate a herbaceous border one year if you are likely to leave it early in the next. As for yew hedges and delights of that kind, no one plants them unless he has a good hope that his son will be there to enjoy them after he has gone. The American, so we were told, and so, of course, believed, is always looking forward to moving into a new house.

This is because he is alert, sanguine, and a lover of change. The Englishman is inclined to settle down in one house, and it is very difficult to root him out of it. Therefore gardens are commonly possible in England and rarely so in America.

We did indeed see some gardens in America, and they were tended with all the care which flower lovers display everywhere. We saw in them plants brought from very different places, round which there doubtless gathered all sorts of associations, whose blossoms were redolent with the perfume of happy memories as well as their own natural scents. But these gardens belonged to men who, either through the necessity of their particular occupation or through some eccentricity of character, felt that they were likely to remain in one place.

Gardens are generally best loved and most carefully tended by women. I have known men who took a real interest in plants, but for the most part men who spend their leisure hours in gardens occupy themselves in mowing the grass or scuffling the walks. They will trim the edges of flower-beds with shears, they will sometimes even dig, but their hearts are not with the growing plants. Often they confess

as much openly, saying without shame that mowing is capital exercise after office hours, or that the celery bed must be properly trenched if it is to come to perfection. No one who works in this spirit is a gardener, nor is a man who merely desires a tidy trimness. To the real gardener neatness is an unimportant detail. It is better that a flower should grow in a bed with ragged edges than that it should wither slowly in the middle of the trimmest of lawns. It is women, far oftener than men, who possess or are possessed by the instinct for getting things to grow. It is, after all, a sort of mother instinct, since flowers, like children, only respond to those who love them. Probably every woman who has the mother instinct has the garden instinct too, and most women, we may be thankful for it, are potentially good mothers.

Perhaps it is the fact that he is content to stay still long enough to render gardens possible which makes the Englishman attractive as a husband. It is easy to understand that there is something very fascinating to a garden lover in the prospect of attachment to one particular spot. It is a great thing to feel: "Here I shall live until the end of living comes,

and then my sons will live here after me. All the rockeries I build, all the trees I plant, all my pergolas and rose hedges are for delight in coming years, for delight still in the years beyond my span of living." This instinct for a settled home, of which a garden is the symbol, is surely stronger in woman than in any man. Woman is after all the stable part of humanity. Man fights, invents, frets, fusses, and passes. Woman is the link between the generations. Man makes life possible and great. It is woman who continues life, hands it on. Her nature requires stability. She feels after settledness in hope of finding it.

If I were a philosopher I should pursue these speculations and write several pages about men and women which it would be very difficult for anyone to understand. But I have no taste for hunting elusive thoughts among the shadows of vague words. I am content to note my little facts, that American men are more restless than Englishmen, that there are fewer gardens in America than England, that most women like gardens, and that there are more marriages between American women and English men than between English women and American men.

I came across a curious example of American restlessness a little while ago. There was a footman, very expert in his business, who lived and earned good wages in an English house. He was an ambitious footman, and, though his wages were good, he wanted them to be better still. His opportunity came to him. An American wanted a valet, and was prepared to pay very large wages indeed. The footman offered his services, and being, as I said, a very good footman, he secured the vacant position and the wages, which were far beyond any he would ever have earned in England. At the end of two years he happened to meet the butler under whom he had served in the English house. The butler congratulated him on his great wealth. The footman, now a valet, replied that there are several things in the world better worth having than money.

"I haven't," he said, "slept a fortnight at a time in the same bed since I left you, and it's killing me."

Now that would not have killed, or gone near killing an American-born footman, if there is such a thing as an American-born footman. He would have enjoyed it, just as his master did; for that American being very wealthy,

could, if he liked, have slept in the same bed every night for a year, every night for many years, until indeed the bed wore out. He preferred to vary his beds as much as possible. He had, no doubt, many beds which were, in a sense, his own: beds in town houses, beds in shooting boxes, beds in fishing lodges, beds in Europe, beds which he had bought with money and to which he had an indefeasible title as proprietor. But not one of these was, as an Englishman would understand the words, his own bed. There was not one to which he came back after wandering as to a familiar resting-place. They were all just couches to sleep on, more or less comfortable, to be occupied for a night or two, indistinguishable from those which he hired in hotels.

I am told that the English are learning the habit of restlessness from the Americans, as indeed they have learned many other things. If they learn it thoroughly they will, I think, have to give up the hope of being able to marry wealthy American women. Their titles will not purchase desirable brides for them if they are no longer able to offer settled homes. According to a very learned German historian, it was the introduction of the *stabilitas loci* ideal



into the western rules which made monasticism the popular career it was in the Church. It is his old fondness for settling down, and staying there, which made the Englishman so popular as a husband.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE OPEN DOOR

AMERICANS are forced by the restlessness of their nature to move about frequently from house to house, but they have arranged that each temporary abode is very comfortable. They are ahead of the English in their domestic arrangements. I pay this tribute to them very unwillingly, because I myself am more at ease in an inconveniently arranged house. That is because I am accustomed to inconvenience. The English houses are greatly superior to the Irish, therefore to go straight from an Irish house to an American, from Connaught to Chicago, is to plunge oneself too suddenly into strangely civilised surroundings. I admire, but I fear it would be years before I could enjoy an American house. I go to bed most contentedly in a bedroom in which a single candle lights a little circle round it, leaving dim, fascinating spaces, in which anything may lurk. I

like when the candle is extinguished to see a faint glow of light from a fire reflected on the ceiling. I find it pleasant to remember, after I have got into bed, that I do not know in what part of the room I left the matches ; that if I awake in the night and want the light I must go on a dangerous and exciting quest, feeling my way towards the dressing-table, sweeping one thing after another off it while I pass my hand along in search of the matchbox. The glare of the electric light robs bed-going of its romance. The convenient switch beside my hand cuts me off from all chance of midnight adventure.

I like to get out of bed on a frosty morning and find myself in a thoroughly cold room. The effort to do this very trying thing braces me for the day. I slip a hand, an arm, a foot, from the blankets, feel the nip of the air, draw them back again, go through a period of intense mental struggle, make a gallant effort, fling all the bedclothes from me, and stand shivering on the floor. I feel then that I am a strong, virtuous man, fit to go forth and conquer. The glow of righteousness becomes even more delightful if I find a film of ice on the water of my jug, and break it with the

handle of a toothbrush. All this is denied me in an American house. Getting out of bed there is no real test of moral courage. The room is pleasantly warm, a sponge is soft and pliable, not a frozen stone.

I like, where this is still possible, to have my bath in a large tin basin, shallow and flat, which stands in the middle of the bedroom floor, with a mat under it. There are fine old Irish houses in which this delightful way of bathing still survives. Alas! they are, even in Ireland, getting fewer every day. The next best thing is to wander down chilly corridors in search of the single bathroom which the house contains. This is, fortunately, still necessary in most English and nearly all Irish houses. Anyone who is fond of the amusement of reading house agents' advertisements must have noticed the English economy in bathrooms. "Handsome mansion, four reception rooms, lounge hall, billiard room, fifteen bedrooms, bath, hot and cold." I do not believe that there is a house like that in all America. Imagine the excitement of living in it when all the fifteen bedrooms are full. It stimulates a man to feel, as he sallies forth with his towel under his arm, that any one of the other fourteen inhabitants

may have reached the bath before him, that thirteen people may possibly be waiting in a queue outside the door. To get into the bathroom in a house of that kind at the first attempt must be like holding a hand at Bridge with four aces, four kings, four queens, and a knave in it, a thing worth living and waiting for. In America all this is denied us. A bathroom, luxuriously arranged, adjoins each bedroom. Washing is made so ridiculously easy that there ceases to be any virtue in it. No one would say in America that cleanliness is next to godliness. There is no connection between the two things. It would be as sensible to say that breathing is a subordinate kind of virtue. In England a dressing-gown is well-nigh a necessity. I know a thoughtful host who provides one for his guests, a warm, voluminous garment in which it is possible to go comfortably to the bathroom. In America a dressing-gown, for a man, is a useless encumbrance. I dragged one with me, but I shall never take it again ; for, like many other things, it is misnamed. It is only when one has to stop dressing that a dressing-gown is any use.

In these matters of the heating of houses and the arrangement of baths, I prefer what I

am accustomed to, but I know that I am little better than a barbarian. I might, if I had lived in the days when matches were first invented, have sighed for my flint and steel, but I hope I should have recognised the superiority of matches. I might, in the early days of railways, have wished to go travelling in stage-coaches, but I should have known that steam-engines are really better things than horses at dragging heavy weights for long distances. Thus I cling to the romance of icy bedrooms and inconvenient baths, but I acknowledge freely that the Americans have found the better way and made a step forward along the road of human progress.

I am not, however, so obstinately conservative as to fail in appreciating some other points in the American mastery of the domestic arts. I may long for chilly rooms and remote baths, but I thoroughly enjoy clean towels. Never have I met so many clean towels as in America. The English middle-class house-keeper is behind her French sister in the provision of towels, but the American is ahead even of France. The American towel is indeed small, the bath-towel particularly small; but that seems to me a trifling matter, hardly worth

mentioning, when the supply is abundant. I would rather any day have three small apples than one large one, and my feeling about towels is the same. It is a real pleasure to find a row of clean ones waiting every time it becomes necessary to wash. It is certainly a mark of superior civilisation to realise the importance of house linen in daily life. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the American fails in the matter of sheets. What you get are good, very good, smooth, and cool. You are constantly given clean ones. But they are not long enough. In England the sheet on your bed covers your feet completely, and leaves a broad flap at the other end which you can turn over the blankets and tuck under your chin. In America you must either leave your feet sheetless or be content with a mere ribbon of linen under your chin, a narrow strip which will certainly wriggle away during the night. This may not be the fault of the American housekeeper. There may be some kind of linen-draper's Trust which baffles the efforts of reformers. I have heard that in one of the Western States, where the suffrage has been granted to women, a law has been passed that all sheets must be made eighteen inches longer than they usually

are in the other American States. That law is a strong proof of the advantage to the community of allowing women to vote. It also seems to show that the American woman, at all events, is alive to the necessity of reform in this matter of sheets and is determined to do her best to remedy a defect in her household management.

The disuse of doors in those parts of the house which are inhabited during the daytime is a very interesting feature of American domestic life. The first action of an Englishman when he enters a room is to shut the door. His first duty when leaving it, if anyone remains inside, is to shut the door. No well-trained servant ever leaves a door open unless specially requested to do so. Children, from their very earliest years, are taught to shut doors, and punished—it is one of the few things for which a child is systematically punished now—for leaving doors open. An English mother calls after her child as he leaves the room the single word “door”; or, if she is a very polite and affectionate mother, two words, “door, dear,” or “door, please.” An American child would not understand a request made in this elliptical form. It knows of course what a door is, just



as it knows what a wall is, but it would be puzzled by the mere utterance of the word, just as an English child would be if its mother suddenly called to it, "wall," or "wall, dear," or "wall, please." The American child would wonder what its mother wanted to say about a door. The English child understands thoroughly in the same way as we all understand what a dentist means when he says, "Open, please." It is never our favourite books, our tightly clenched hands, or our screwed up eyes, which he wants us to open, always our mouths. The word "open" is enough for us. So the word "door," through a long association of ideas, at once suggests to the English child the idea of shutting it.

An Englishman is thoroughly uncomfortable in a room with the door open. An American's feeling about shut doors was very well expressed to me by a lady who had been paying a number of visits to friends in England.

"English houses," she said, "always seem to me like hotels. When you go into them you see nothing except shut doors."

If, after due apologies, you ask why Americans have no doors between their sitting-rooms, or why, when they have doors they

do not use them, you always get the same answer.

“Doors,” they say, “are necessary in England to keep out draughts, because the English do not know how to heat their houses. In our houses all rooms and passages are kept up to an even temperature and we do not require doors.”

This is an intelligible, but not the real explanation of this curious difference between the Americans and the English. There are some English houses which are centrally heated and in which the temperature is as even, though rarely as high, as in American houses; but the Englishmen who live in them still shut the doors. An Englishman would shut the door of the inner chamber of a Turkish bath if there were a door to shut. In summer, when the days are very warm, he opens all the windows he can, but he does not sit with the door open. Temperature has nothing to do with this fondness for doors. In the same way there are in America some houses which are not centrally heated, very old-fashioned houses, but they are as doorless as the others. The fact seems to be not that doors were disused when central heating became common, but that central heat-

ing was invented so that people who disliked doors could be warm without them.

I think the lady who told me that the English houses seemed like hotels to her hinted at the real explanation. The open door is a symbol of hospitality. It is the expression of sociability of disposition. The Americans are hospitable and marvellously sociable. They naturally like to live among open doors or with no doors at all, so that anyone can walk up to them and speak to them without difficulty. The Englishman, on the other hand, wants to keep other people away from him, even members of his own family. His dearest desire is to have some room of his own into which he can shut himself where no one has a right to intrude. He calls it his "den," which means the lurking place of a morose and solitary animal. Rabbits, which are sociable creatures, live in burrows. Bees, which have perfected the art of life in community, have hives. The bear has its den. Every room in an old-fashioned English middle-class house is really a den, though sometimes, as in the case of the drawing-room, a den which is meant for the use of several beasts of the same kind at once. A change is indeed coming slowly over English life in this matter.

The introduction into middle classes of what is called by house-agents "the lounge hall," is a departure from the "den" theory of domestic life. The "lounge hall" is, properly speaking, a public room. It is available at all hours of the day, and no one claims it specially as his own. It is accessible at once to the stranger who comes into the house from the street. It is still rare in England, but where it exists it marks an approach towards American ideals. The term "living-room," only lately introduced by architects into descriptions of English houses, is another sign that we are becoming more sociable than we were. It is not simply another name for a drawing-room. It stands for a new idea, an American idea. The drawing-room, properly the withdrawing-room, is for the use of people who want to escape temporarily from family life, the living-room for those who live it to the full.

In the American house there are no "dens." The American likes to feel that he is in direct personal contact with the members of his family and with his guest. It does not annoy him, even if he happen to be reading a book on economics, to feel that his wife may sit down beside him, or his daughter walk past the back

of his chair humming a tune without his having had any warning that either of them was at hand. The noise made by a servant collecting knives and plates after dinner, reaching him through a drawn curtain, does not disturb his enjoyment of a cigar. The servant is to him a fellow human-being, and the sound of her activities is a pleasant reminder of the comradeship of man. He too has had his moments of activity during the day. A guest in an American house is, for the time being, a member of the family, not a stranger who, however welcome he may be, does not presume to intrude upon his host's privacy.

The "porch," as it is called, a striking feature of the American house, is another evidence of the spirit of sociability. A "porch" is a glorified and perfected verandah. In summer it is a large open-air sitting-room. In winter it can, by a common arrangement, be made into a kind of sun-parlour. It has its roof supported by wooden posts. When the cold weather comes frames, like very large window sashes, are fitted between the posts, and a glass-sided room is made. It is evident that the life in these porches is of a very public kind. The passer-by, the casual wanderer

along the road outside, sees the American family in its porch, can, if he cares to, note what each member of the family is doing. The American has no objection to this publicity. He is not doing anything of which he is the least ashamed. If other people can see him, he can see them in return. The arrangement gratifies his instinct for sociability. The Englishman, on the other hand, hates to be seen. Nothing would induce him to make a habit of sitting in a verandah. Even in the depths of the country, when his house is a long way from the road, he fits thin muslin curtains across the lower part of his windows. These keep out a good deal of light, and in that way are annoying to him, but he puts up with gloom rather than run any risk, however small, that a stranger, glancing through the window, might actually see him. Yet the Englishman commonly leads a blameless life in his own home. He seldom employs his leisure in any shameful practices. His casement curtains are simply evidences of an almost morbid love of privacy.

The first thing an Englishman does when he builds a house is to surround it with high walls. This, indeed, is not an English peculiarity. It prevails all over Western Europe.

It is a most anti-social custom and ought to be suppressed by law, because it robs many people of a great deal of innocent pleasure. The suburbs of Dublin, to take an example, ought to be very beautiful. There are mountains to the south and hills to the west and north of the city, all of them lovely in outline and colouring. There is a wide and beautiful bay on the east. But the casual wayfarer cannot see either the mountains or the bay. He must walk between high yellow walls, walls built, I suppose, round houses ; but we can only know this by hearsay. For the walls hide the houses as well as the view. In Sorrento, which is even more exquisitely situated than Dublin, you walk for miles and miles between high walls, white in this case. The only difference between the view you see at Dublin and that which you see at Sorrento is that the patch of sky you see in Dublin is grey, at Sorrento generally blue. At Cintra, one of the world's most famous beauty spots, the walls are grey, and there you cannot even see the sky, because the owners of the houses inside the walls have planted trees, and the branches of the trees meet over the road. The Americans do not build walls round their houses.

The humblest pedestrian, going afoot through the suburbs of Philadelphia, Indianapolis, or any other city, sees not only the houses but anything in the way of a view which lies beyond them.

This is not because America is a republic and therefore democratic in spirit. Portugal is a republic too, having very vigorously got rid of its king, but the walls of Cintra are as high as ever. No one in the world is more democratic than an English Liberal, but the most uncompromising Liberals build walls round their houses as high as those of any Tory. The absence of walls in America is simply another evidence of the wonderful sociability of the people. Walls outside houses are like doors inside. The European likes both because the desire for privacy is in his blood. The American likes neither.

The "Country Club" is an institution which could flourish only among a very sociable people. There are, of course, clubs of many sorts in England. There is the club proper, the club without qualification, which is found at its very best in London. In books like *Whitaker's Almanac*, which classify clubs, it is described as "social," but this is only in-



tended to distinguish it from political or sporting clubs. There is no suggestion that it is sociable, and in fact it is not. It is possible to belong to a club in London for years without knowing a dozen of your fellow-members. It often seems as if the members of these clubs went to them mainly for the purpose of not getting to know each other; a misfortune which might happen to them anywhere else, but from which they are secure in their clubs. There are also all over England clubs specially devoted to particular objects, golf clubs, yacht clubs, and so forth. In these the members are drawn together by their interest in a common pursuit, and are forced into some sort of acquaintanceship. But these are very different in spirit and intention from the American Country Club. It exists as a kind of centre of the social life of the neighbourhood. There may be and often are golf links connected with it. There are tennis-courts, sometimes swimming-baths. There is always a ball-room. There are luncheon-rooms, tea-rooms, reading-rooms. In connection with one such club which I saw there are sailing matches for a one design class of boats. But neither golf nor tennis, dancing nor sailing, is the

object of the club's existence. Sport is encouraged by these clubs for the sake of general sociability. In England sociability is a by-product of an interest in sport.

The Country Club at Tuxedo is not perhaps the oldest, but it is one of the oldest institutions of the kind in America. In connection with it a man can enjoy almost any kind of recreation from a Turkish bath to a game of tennis, either the lawn or the far rarer original kind. At the proper time of year there are dances, and a *débutante* acquires, I believe, a certain prestige by "coming out" at one of them. But the club exists primarily as the social centre of Tuxedo. It is in one way the ideal, the perfect country club. It not only fosters, it regulates and governs the social life of the place.

Tuxedo has been spoken of as a millionaire's colony. It is a settlement, if not of millionaires, at all events of wealthy people. The park, an immense tract of land, is owned by the club. Ground for building can be obtained only by those who are elected members of the club and who are prepared to spend a certain sum as a minimum on the building of their houses. In theory the place is reserved for

people who either do or will know each other socially, who are approximately on the same level as regards wealth, and who all want to meet each other frequently, for one purpose or another, in the club. In practice, certain difficulties necessarily arise. A man may be elected a member of the club and build a house. He may be a thoroughly desirable person, but in course of time he dies. His son may be very undesirable, or his son may sell the house to someone whom the club is not willing to admit to membership. But Tuxedo society, instead of becoming, as might have been expected, a very narrow clique, seems to be singularly broad-minded and tolerant. The difficulty of preserving the character of the place and keeping a large society together as, in all its essentials, a club, is very much less than might be expected. The place is extremely interesting to any observer of American social life. The club regulates everything. It runs a private police force for the park. It keeps up roads. It supplies electric light and, what is hardly less necessary in America, ice to all the houses. It levies, though I suppose without any actual legal warrant, regular rates. The fact that the experiment was not wrecked

long ago on the rocks of snobbery goes to show that society in America is singularly fluid compared to that of any European country. That a considerable number of people should want to live together in such a way is a witness to the sociability of America. No other country club has realised its ideal as the club at Tuxedo has, but every country club—and you find them all over America—has something of the spirit of Tuxedo.

Tuxedo is immensely interesting in another way. Nowhere else in the world, I suppose, is it possible to see so many different kinds of domestic architecture gathered together in a comparatively small space. A walk round the shores of the lake gives you an opportunity of seeing houses built in the dignified and spacious colonial style, a happy modification of the English Georgian. Beside one of these, close to it, may be a house like that of a Mexican rancher, and the hill behind is crowned with a French château. There are houses which must have had Italian models, others which suggest memories of Tudor manor-houses, others built after the fashion of Queen Anne's time. There are houses whose architects evidently had an eclectic appreciation of

all the houses built anywhere or at any time, who have tried to embody the most desirable features of very various styles in one building. The general effect of a view of Tuxedo is exceedingly bewildering at first, but almost every house is the expression of some individual taste, either good or bad. An architect may start, apparently very often does start, with the idea of building a house with twelve rooms in it at a cost of four thousand pounds. Having thus settled size and price he may go ahead trusting to luck about the appearance. Or an architect may start with the idea of building a house in a certain style, or to express some feeling, dignity, homeliness, grandeur, or anything else. The architects who built the Tuxedo houses all seem to have gone to work on the latter plan.

If the Tuxedo experiment in social life fails and the club goes into liquidation, the United States Government might do worse than buy the whole place as it stands and turn it into a college of domestic architecture. The students could, without travelling more than a mile or two, study every known kind of country house. But, indeed, a college of this sort seems less needed in America than anywhere else. It is

not only the insides of the houses which are well planned. The outsides of the newer houses are for the most part beautiful to look at. And one can see them, there being no walls.

## CHAPTER XII

### COLLEGES AND THEIR STUDENTS

THE municipal elections in New York which resulted in the defeat of Tammany were fought out with great vigour in all the usual ways. There were speeches, bands, and flags. The newspapers were full of the sayings of the different candidates, and the leader-writers of each party seemed to be highly successful in cornering the speakers of the other party. It was shown clearly every day that orators shamelessly contradicted themselves, went back on their own principles and must, if they had any respect for logic or decency, either retract their latest remarks or explain them. All this was very interesting to us. It would have been interesting to anyone. It was particularly interesting to us because it was almost new to us. Elections are, I suppose, fought in more or less the same way everywhere; but in Connaught we hardly ever

have elections. An independent candidate bubbles up occasionally, but as a rule we are content to return to Parliament the proper man, that is to say the man whom somebody, we never quite know who, says we ought to return.

I gathered the impression that elections must be an exciting sport for those engaged in them. I do not think that the "pomp and circumstance" of the business, the outward manifestations of activity, can make much difference to the result. Speeches, for instance, are certainly thrilling things to make, and I can understand how it is that orators welcome elections as heaven-sent opportunities for the exercise of their art. But the people who listen to the speeches always seem to have their minds made up beforehand whether they agree with the speaker or not. They know what he is going to say and are prepared with hoots or cheers. I never heard of anyone who came to hoot remaining to cheer. I doubt whether there is a single modern instance of a speech having affected the destiny of a vote. A very good speech might indeed produce some effect if it were not that there is always an equally good speech made at the



same time on the other side. Election speeches are like tug-boats pulling different ways at the opposite ends of a large ship. They neutralise each other and the ship drifts gently, sideways, with the tide.

It cannot be seriously maintained that bands or flags help voters to make up their minds. In nine cases out of ten it is impossible to tell for which side a band is playing, and therefore unlikely that it will draw voters to one side rather than the other. In the tenth case, when the band by selecting some particular tune makes its meaning clear, the music is not of a kind which moves the listener to any feeling of gratitude to the candidate who pays for it. I should, I think, feel bound to vote for a man who gave me "*panem et circenses*," but I should expect good bread and an attractive circus. I should not dream of voting for a candidate who provided me with inferior music. The flags are a real addition to the gaiety of city life. The ordinary elector loves to see them fluttering about. But the ordinary elector is not by any means a fool. He knows that the flags will be taken down very soon after the election is over. If any candidate promised to keep his flags flying as a

permanent decoration of the city streets he might capture a few votes. But we all know that none of them will do anything as useful as that.

Nor do I think that the editors of newspapers produce much effect by showing up the inconsistencies of politicians and pinning them down to-day, when they are driven to say something quite different to the things which under stress of other circumstances they said yesterday. It does not take a clever man, like a newspaper editor, to corner a politician. Any fool can do that ; and the performance of an obviously easy trick does not move an audience at all. An acrobat who merely hops across the stage on one leg gets no applause and the box-office returns fall away. The thing is too easy. It is the man who does something really hard, balances himself on the end of an umbrella and juggles with twenty balls at once, who attracts the public. If a newspaper editor at an election time would, instead of showing up the other side, offer proofs that the men on his own side are consistent, logical, and high-principled, he would have enormous influence with the voters. " Anyone," so the ordinary man would reason,

“who can prove things like that about politicians, must be amazingly clever. If he is amazingly clever, far cleverer than I ever hope to be, then there is a strong probability that his side is the right one. I shall vote for it.” The ordinary man, I repeat, is not nearly such a fool as is generally supposed. He is quite capable of reasoning, and he would reason, I am sure, just in the way I have suggested, if he were given a chance.

The keen interest which we took in the showy side of electioneering made us diligent readers of the newspapers. We were rewarded beyond our hopes. We came across, on the very evening of the election itself, a little paragraph, tucked away in a corner, which we might very easily have missed if we had been less earnest students. In a certain district in New York, so this paragraph told us, there was a queue of voters waiting outside a polling station. Among them was a man who was known to be or was suspected of being hostile to Tammany. It was likely that he would cast his vote on the other side. There were, looking thoughtfully at the queue, certain men described by the newspaper as “gangsters” in the pay of the Tammany

organisation. They seized the voter whose principles seemed to them objectionable and dragged him out of the queue, plainly in order to prevent his recording his vote. So far there was nothing of very special interest in the paragraph. We knew beforehand—even in Ireland we know this—that voters are a good deal influenced by the strength of the party machine. The strength is seldom displayed in its nakedly physical form on this side of the Atlantic; but it is always there and is really the determining force in most elections. It was the thing which happened next which gave the incident its value. A university student who happened to be engaged in social work in the neighbourhood saw what was done. He was one man and there were several “gangsters,” but he attacked them at once. He was, as might be supposed, as he himself must surely have foreseen, worsted in the fray which followed. The “gangsters,” after the manner of their kind, mauled, beat and kicked him to such an extent that he had to be carried to a hospital. It did not appear that this university student was a party man, eager for the triumph of his side as the gangsters were for the victory of theirs.

He seems to have acted on the simple principle that a man who has a right to vote ought not to be interfered with in the exercise of that right. He was on the side of justice and liberty. He was not concerned with politics of either kind.

I do not know what happened to that student afterwards. I searched the papers in vain for any further reference to the incident. I wanted to know whether the voter voted in the end. I wanted to know what was done to the gangsters. I wanted to know whether the student recovered from his injuries or not. I wanted, above all, to know whether anyone recognised how fine a thing that student did. I never discovered another paragraph about the incident.

I was talking some time afterwards to an English friend, the friend to whom I have already referred who knows America very well and who offered to take care of me while I was there. I told him the story of the voter and the Tammany gangsters.

"These things," he said, "happen over here. They are constantly happening. One gets into the way of not being shocked by them. But there always *is* that university student somewhere round, when they do happen."

It is an amazingly high tribute to the American universities. If my friend is right; if blatant force and abominable injustice do indeed find themselves faced, always and as a matter of course, by a university student, then the universities are doing a very splendid work. And I am inclined to think that my friend is right. There is another story of the same kind, one of many which might be told. This one came to me, not in a newspaper but from the lips of a man who told me that he was a witness of what happened.

There was—I forget where—a kind of settlement, half camp, half town, built in a lonely place for the workmen of a company which was conducting some mining or engineering enterprise. The town, if I am to call it a town, was owned and ruled by the company. The workmen were of various nationalities, and, taken as a whole, a rough lot. It was, no doubt, difficult to keep them contented, difficult enough to keep them at all in such a place. It would be probably unjust to say that the company encouraged immorality; but the existence of disorderly houses in the place was winked at. The men wanted them. The officials of the company, we may suppose, found their line of least

resistance in ignoring an evil which they may have felt they could not cure. After a while, during one summer vacation there came to the place a university student. He was not a miner or an engineer, and had no particular business with the company. He was, apparently, on a kind of mission; but whether he was preaching Christianity or social reform of a general kind I was not told. He was the inevitable university student of my friend's remark.

He found himself face to face with an evil thing which he at all events would not ignore. He made his protest. Now no man of the world, certainly no business man, objects to a proper protest, temperately made, provided the protester does not go too far. The man of the world is tolerant. He is a consistent believer in the policy of living and letting live. He recognises that people with principles must be allowed to state them. It is in order to be stated that principles exist. But he holds that in common fairness he ought to be allowed to ignore these statements of principle. That was just what this university student could not understand. He went on protesting more and more forcibly until he made the officials un-

comfortable and the men exceedingly angry. It was the men, either with, or, as I hope, without the knowledge of their superiors, who first threatened, then beat that university student ; beat him on the head with a sandbag, and finally drove him from the place with a warning that he had better not return again.

He did return, bringing with him certain officers of the law. He was a man of some strength of character, and the recollection of the beating did not cause him to hesitate. Unfortunately the officers of the law could not do much. The disorderly houses were all quite orderly when they appeared. They were small shops selling apples, matches, and other innocent things. There was no evidence to be got that anything worse had ever gone on in them than the sale of apples and matches. The previous inhabitants of these houses were picnicking in the woods for a few days. All that the officers of the law were able to do was to conduct the university student safely out of the place. That was difficult enough.

I am not sure that this story is true, for I did not read it in a newspaper ; but it is very like several others which I heard. They may all be false or very greatly exaggerated, but they



show at least the existence of a popular myth in which the university student figures always with the same kind of character. Behind every myth there is some reality. Even solar myths, the vaguest myths there are, lead back ultimately to the sun, which is indubitably there. It seems to me that whether he actually does these fine things or not, the American university student has succeeded in impressing the public with the idea that he is the kind of man who might do them. That in itself is no small achievement.

I wanted very much, because of the myth and for other reasons, to see something of American university life. I did see something, a little of it, both at Yale and Princeton.

I have heard it said that the Englishman is more attached to his school than to his university, that in after life he will think of himself as belonging to Eton, to Harrow, to Winchester, rather than to Oxford or to Cambridge. The school, for some reason, rather than the university, is regarded as "the mother" from whom the life of the man's soul flowed, to whom his affection turns. An Oxford man or a Cambridge man is indeed all his life long proud, as he very well may be, of his connection with his

university, but his school is the subject of his deepest feeling. Round it rather than the university gathers that emotion which, for want of better words, may be described as educational patriotism. An Irishman, on the other hand, if he is a graduate of Dublin University, thinks more of "Trinity" than he does of his school. He may have been at one of the most famous English public schools, but his university, to a considerable extent, obliterates the memories of it. He thinks of himself through life as a T.C.D. man.

America is like Ireland in this respect. I find, looking back on my memories of the American men whom I met most frequently, that I know about several of them whether they are Yale men, Princeton men, or Harvard men. I do not know about any single one of them what school they belonged to. I never asked any questions on the subject. Such information as I got came to me accidentally. It came to me without my knowing that I was getting it. Only afterwards did I realise that I knew A. to be a Yale man, B. to be a Harvard man, and so forth. In England the information which comes unsought about a man concerns his school rather than his university. It is the

name of his school which drops from his lips when he begins talking about old days. There are oftener books about his school than about his university on his shelves, photographs of his school on the walls of his study.

I do not know that there is in the American universities any definitely planned and deliberate effort to create or foster this spirit of patriotism. There is certainly no such effort apparent in Dublin University. The spirit is there ; that is all that can be said. It pervades these institutions. Only an occasional and more or less eccentric undergraduate escapes its influence.

The patriotism is indeed much more obvious and vocal in America than in Dublin. We had the good luck to be present at a football match between Yale and Colgate Universities. It was not a match of first-rate importance, but an enormous crowd of spectators gathered to witness it. The excitement of the supporters of both sides was intense. There was no possible mistake about the fact that professors and undergraduates, old men who had graduated long ago and boys who were not yet undergraduates, wives, mothers and sisters of graduates and undergraduates, were all eagerly

anxious about the result of the game. Yale, in the end, was quite unexpectedly beaten. It is not too much to say that a certain gloom was distinctly noticeable afterwards everywhere in Yale. It hung over people who were not specially interested in athletics of any kind. It affected the spirits of my host's parlourmaid.

Very shortly after my return home I watched a football match between Dublin University and Oxford. The play was just as keen and sportsmanlike as the play between Yale and Colgate ; but there was nothing like the same general interest in the game. There was a sprinkling of spectators round the ground, an audience which could not compare in size with that of Yale. They were interested in the game, intelligently interested. They applauded good play when they saw it ; but there was nothing to correspond to the tense excitement which we witnessed in America. The game was a game. If Dublin won, well and good. If Oxford won, then Dublin must try to do better next time. No one feared defeat as a disaster. No one was prepared to hail victory with wild enthusiasm. A stranger could not have gone through Newhaven on the day of the Yale and Colgate football match

without being aware that something of great importance was happening. The whole town seemed to be streaming towards the football ground. In Dublin you might have walked not only through the city but through most parts of the college itself on the day of the match against Oxford and you would not have discovered, unless you went into the park, that there was a football match. Yet the pride of a Dublin man in his university is as deep and lasting as that of any American.

The reason of the difference is perhaps to be found in the fact that everything connected with university athletics is far more highly organised in America than on this side of the Atlantic. The undergraduate spectators are drilled to shout together. They practise beforehand songs which they sing on the occasion of the match for the encouragement of their own side. Young men with megaphones stand in front of closely packed rows of undergraduates. They give the signal for shouting. With wavings of their arms they conduct the yells of the crowd as musicians conduct their orchestras. The result is something as different as possible from the casual, accidental applause of our spectators. It is

the difference between a winter rainstorm and the shower of an April morning. This organised enthusiasm affects everyone present. Sober-looking men and women shout and wave little flags tumultuously. They cannot help themselves. I understood, after seeing that football match, why it is that America produces more successful religious revivalists than England does. The Americans realise that emotion is highly infectious. They have mastered the art of spreading it. I do not know whether this is a useful art or not. It probably is, if the emotion is a genuine and worthy one; but it is not pleasant to think that one might be swept away, temporarily intoxicated, by the skill of some organiser who is engaged in propagating a morbid enthusiasm. However that may be, love for a university is a thoroughly healthy thing. It cannot be wrong to foster it by songs and shouts or even—a curious reversion to the totem religion of our remote ancestors—by identifying oneself with a bulldog or a tiger.

I met one evening some young men who had graduated in Trinity College, Dublin, and afterwards gone over for a post-graduate course to a theological college connected with

one of the American universities. We talked about Dublin chiefly, but I made one inquiry from them about their American experience.

“ I suppose,” I said, “ that you have to work a great deal harder here than you did at home ? ”

Their answer was given with smiling assurance.

“ Oh, dear, no ; nothing like so hard.”

I should like very much to have further reliable information on this point. Something might be got, perhaps, by consulting a number of Rhodes scholars at Oxford. My impression—a vague one—is that the ordinary undistinguished American undergraduate is not required to work so hard as an undergraduate of the same kind is in England or Ireland. In an American magazine devoted to education I came across an article which complained that, in the matter of what may be called examination knowledge, the American undergraduate is not the equal of the English undergraduate. He does not know as much when he enters the university, and he does not know as much when he leaves it. This was an American opinion. It would be very interesting to have it confirmed or refuted.

But no one, on either side of the Atlantic, supposes that the kind of knowledge which is useful in examinations is of the first importance. The value of a university does not depend upon the number of facts which it can drive into the heads of average men ; but on whether it can, by means of its teaching and its atmosphere, get the average man into the habit of thinking nobly, largely, and sanely. It seems certain that the American university training does have a permanent effect on the men who go through it, an effect like that produced by English schools, and certainly also by English universities, on their students. A man who is, throughout life, loyal to his school or university has not passed through it uninfluenced. It seems likely that the American universities are succeeding in turning out very good citizens. The existence of what I have called the university student myth, the existence of a general opinion that university men are likely to be found on the side of civic righteousness, is a witness to the fact that the universities are doing their main work well.

The little, the very little I was able to see of university life helped me to understand how the work is being done. The chapel services,



on weekdays and Sundays, were in many ways strange to me, and I cannot imagine that I, trained in other rituals, would find digestible the bread of life which they provide. But I was profoundly impressed by the reality of them. Here was no official tribute to a God conceived of as a constitutional monarch to whom respect and loyalty is due but whose will is of no very great importance, a tribute saved perhaps from formality by the mystic devotion of a few ; but an effort, groping and tentative no doubt, to get into actual personal touch with a divinity conceived of as not far remote from common life. These chapel services—exercises is the better word for them—can hardly fail to have a profound effect upon the ordinary man. I have stood in the chapel of Oriel College at Oxford and felt that now and then men of the finer kind, worshipping amid the austere dignity of the place, might grow to be saints, might see with their eyes and handle with their hands the mysterious Word of Life. I sat in the chapel at Princeton, I listened to a sermon at Yale, and felt that men of commoner clay might go out from them to face a battering from the fists and boots of Tammany gangsters.

It seems to me significant that Americans have not got the words "don" and "donnish." They are terms of reproach in England, but the very fact that they are in use proves that they are required. They describe what exists. The Americans have no use for the words because they have not got the man or the quality which they name. The teaching staffs of the American universities do not develop the qualities of the don. They do not tend to become a class apart with a special outlook upon life. It is possible to meet a professor—even a professor of English literature—in ordinary society, to talk to him, to be intimate with him and not to discover that he is a professor. Charles Lamb maintained that schoolmastering left an indelible mark upon a man, that having schoolmastered he never afterwards was quite the same as other men. I had a friend once who boasted that he could "spot" a parson however he was dressed, had spotted parsons who were not dressed at all—in Turkish baths. I do not believe that the most careful student of professional mannerisms could detect an American professor out of his lecture-room. It is possible that this note of ordinary worldliness in the members

of the staff of the American university has a beneficial effect upon the students. It may help to suggest the thought that a university course is no more than a preparation for life, is not, as most of us thought once, a thing complete in itself.

In all good universities there is a broad democratic spirit among the undergraduates. They may, and sometimes do, despise the students of other universities as men of inferior class, but they only despise those of their fellow students in their own university who, according to the peculiar standards of youth, deserve contempt. In American universities this democratic spirit is stronger than it is with us because there is greater opportunity for its development. There are wider differences of wealth—it is difficult to speak of class in America—among the university students there than here. There are no men in English or Irish universities earning their keep by cleaning the boots and pressing the clothes of their better endowed fellow students. In American universities there are such men, and it is quite possible that one of them may be president of an important club, or captain of a team, elected to these posts by the very men

whose boots he cleans. If he is fit for such honours they will be given him. The fact that he cleans boots will not stand in his way. The wisdom of mediæval schoolmen made room in universities for poor students, sizars, servitors. The American universities, with their committees of employment for students who want to earn, are doing the old thing in a new way; and public opinion among the undergraduates themselves approves.

On the subject of the higher university education of girls American opinion is sharply divided. There are people there, just as there are in England, who say that the whole thing is a mistake, that it is better for girls not to go to college on any terms, under any system. I suppose that we must call these people reactionary. There cannot be very many of them anywhere. It was a surprise to me to find any at all in America. They are not, I think, very influential. Among those who favour the higher education of girls there are many who believe whole-heartedly in co-education. I had no opportunity of seeing a co-educational college, but I listened to a detailed description of the life in one from a lady who had lived it. According to her co-

education is the one perfect system yet hit upon. Its critics urge two curiously inconsistent objections to it. One man, who is a philosopher and also seemed to know what he was talking about, told me that boys and girls educated together lose the sense of sex mystery, which lies at the base of romantic love, and consequently do not want to marry. According to his theory, based upon a careful observation of facts, the students of co-educational universities never fall in love with each other or with anyone else. If the system were widely adopted and had this effect upon the students everywhere, the results would certainly be very unfortunate. Another critic, equally well informed, said that the real objection to co-education is that the students do little else except fall in love with each other. This, though no doubt educative in a broad sense of the word, is not exactly the kind of education we send boys and girls to universities to get. It must be very gratifying to the friends of the system to feel that these two objections cannot both be sound.

Co-educational colleges are chiefly to be found in the west, among the newer states. In the east girls get their higher education

for the most part in colleges of their own. Smith College, for instance, has no connection with any of the men's universities. Nor has Vasa, nor Bryn Mawr. These institutions have their own staffs, their own courses and examinations, their own rules, and confer their own degrees. Barnard College, on the other hand, is closely connected with Columbia University, occupying much the same position as Girton and St. Margaret's Hall do with regard to Cambridge and Oxford, scarcely as intimately joined to Columbia as Trinity Hall is to Dublin University. I had the opportunity of learning something of the life of Smith College. I was immensely impressed by the spirit of the place, as indeed I was by that of all the girls' schools and colleges which I saw. There was an infectious kind of eagerness about both pupils and teachers. There is a feeling of hopefulness. It is as if life were looked upon as a great and joyful adventure in which many discoveries of good things may be expected, much strenuous work may be done gladly, in which no disillusion waits for those who are of good heart. Not the girls alone, but those who teach and guide them, are young, young in the way which defies the

passing of years to make them old. We are not young because we have seen eighteen summers and no more, or old because we have seen eighty. We are old when we have shut the doors of our hearts against the desire of new things, and steeled ourselves against the hope of good. We are young if we refuse, even when our heads are grey, to believe that disappointment inevitably waits for us. The world and everything in it belongs to the young. It is this pervading sense of youthfulness which makes the American girls' colleges so fascinating to a stranger. It is not difficult to believe that the girls who come out of them are able to take their places by the side of men in business life, or if the commoner and happier lot waits them, are well fitted to be the partners of men who do great things and the mothers of men who will do greater things still.

I take it that the American universities, both those for men and women, are the greatest things in America to-day. This, curiously enough, is not the American idea. The ordinary American citizen is proud of every single thing in his country except his universities. He is always a little apologetic

about them. He compares his country with England, and is convinced that America is superior in every respect, except in the matter of universities. When he speaks of the English universities he shows a certain sense of reverence, and makes mention of his own much in the spirit of Touchstone, who introduced Audrey as "a poor thing, but my own."



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE IRISHMAN ABROAD

THE educated American seems to have a great deal of affection for Ireland, but is not over fond of Irishmen. Our country, considered as an island situated on the far side of the Atlantic, makes a strong appeal to him. It is a land of a thousand wrongs, a pitiful waif on the hard highway of the world. It smells strongly of poetry and music in a minor key, and the American is, like all good business men, an incurable sentimentalist.

It is always pleasant to be loved, and it is nice to feel that America has this affection for our poor, lost land. But the love would gratify us much more than it does if there were a little less pity mixed up in it, and if it were not taken for granted that we all write poetry. I remember meeting an American lady who was quite lyrical in her appreciation of Ireland. She had penetrated into the

country as far as Avoca, making the trip from Dublin in a motor car. She stayed, so she told me, "in a dear old-fashioned inn in Dublin." She had forgotten its name, but described its situation to me very accurately. I could not possibly make a mistake about it. My heart was hot within me when I suggested that it might have been the Shelbourne Hotel at which she stayed. Her face lit up with a gleam of recognition of the name.

"Yes," she said, "that's it, such a sweet old place; just Ireland all over, and really quite comfortable when you get used to it."

Now the Shelbourne Hotel is our idea of a thoroughly up-to-date cosmopolitan caravan-serai.

Even after a visit to America and a considerable experience of American hotels I cannot think of the Shelbourne Hotel as an inn, as old-fashioned, or as in any way Irish except through the accident of its situation. It evidently suggests to the American mind tender thoughts of Mr. Yeats' "small cabin, of mud and wattles made" on Innisfree. It suggests no such thoughts to us. Dinner at the Shelbourne Hotel costs five shillings: nothing to an American, of course, but a

heavy price to us in Ireland. It consists of several courses, and we think it quite a grand dinner. It seems to the American that he is at last reduced to the traditional Irish diet of potatoes and potheen whisky. It is this way of thinking about Ireland which takes the sweetness out of the American's genuine affection for our country. We do not mind admitting that we are half a century behind America in every respect, but we like to think that we are making some progress.

An American's eyes soften when you talk to him about Ireland, and you feel that at any moment he may say "dear land," so deep is his sentimental pity and affection for our country. But his eyes harden when you mention Irishmen, and you feel that at any moment he may say something very nasty about them. The plain fact is that Irishmen are not very popular in America. We have, it appears, managed the American's municipal politics for him in several of his principal cities, and he does not like it. But I am not sure that his resentment is quite just. Somebody must manage municipal politics everywhere. For a good many years the American would not manage them himself. He was too

busy making money to bother himself about municipal politics. We took over the job—at a price. He paid the price with a shrug of the shoulders. I cannot see that he has much to complain about. Lately he has kicked—not against the size of the price: it is not the American way to higggle about money—but against there being any price at all. He has got it into his head that municipal politics ought to be run “free gratis and for nothing” by high-souled patriotic men. I sincerely hope that he will realise his ideal, though I doubt whether any politics anywhere can be run in that way. It will certainly be better for my fellow-countrymen to earn their bread in any way rather than by politics. But there is no sense in being angry with us or abusing us. We worked the machine and took our wages. The American watched the machine running and paid the wages. There was not much to choose between him and us.

There is another reason why we are not as popular as we might be—as no doubt we ought to be—in America. We have remained Irish. One of the most wonderful things about America is its power of absorbing people. Men and women flow into it from all corners

of the world, and in a very short time, in a couple of generations, become American. I have seen it stated that the very shapes of the skulls of immigrants alter in America; that the son of an Italian man has an American not an Italian skull, even if his mother also came from Italy. Whether this change really takes place in the bones of immigrants I do not know. Quite as surprising a change certainly does take place in their nature. They cease to be foreigners and become American. But the Irish have never been thoroughly Americanised. Their American citizenship becomes a great and dear thing to them, but they are still in some sense citizens of Ireland. If a question ever arose in which American interests clashed with Irish interests there might well be a solid Irish vote in favour of sacrificing America to Ireland. The Irish are a partial exception to the rule that America absorbs its immigrants. It has not thoroughly absorbed us.

This is the shape which the Irish problem has assumed in America. Here at home the question is: is England to govern Irishmen? It has obviously failed to make Englishmen of us. On the other side of the Atlantic the

question is : are Irishmen to govern America ? America has not succeeded in making Americans of all of us so far.

So far. But the position of Irishmen in America is changing. There was a time when we took our place in the American social order as hewers of wood and drawers of water. We were the navvies, the labourers, the men who handled the pickaxe and spade. Now it is men of other races who do this work, Italians and Slavs. We have risen in the scale. The Irish emigrant who lands in New York to-day starts higher up than the Irish emigrant of twenty-five years ago. So long as we were at the bottom of the social scale we were bound together by a community of interest and outlook as well as by nationality. We were easily organised as a voting unit. But men, as they rise in the world, tend more and more to become individuals. They have differing interests. They look at things in different ways. They are far more difficult to organise. The sense of original nationality will remain to us, no doubt, as it remains among Americans of Scottish descent. But it may cease to be an effective political force.

The Ulster Irishman went to America in

large numbers before there was any great immigration of southern and western Irishmen. He fought his way up in the social scale very quickly, and became thoroughly Americanised. He has had a profound influence on American civilisation and character. It has been the influence of digested food, not the force exercised by a lump of dough swallowed hastily. But in time even a lump of dough is digested by a healthy stomach, and the gradual rise of the Irish in the social life of America looks like the beginning of the process of digestion.

There is something else besides the change in his social position which will, in time, make it easier for America to absorb thoroughly the Irish immigrant. The Irish who went to America during the last half of the nineteenth century left their homes with a sense in them of burning wrong. They were men who hated. They hated England and all in Irish life which stood for England. This hate bound them together. Irish political struggles, whether of the Fenian or the Parnell type, appealed to them. Ireland was, in one way or the other, up against England. But all this has changed. Irish politicians are no longer engaged in a struggle with England. They are in alliance

with one set of Englishmen, and only against another set of Englishmen. There is in Irish politics at home an appeal to the man of party feeling. He is keen enough for his own party, keen enough against the other party, but when he gets to America neither of the parties at home can move him to any special enthusiasm. He no longer, when at home, hates England. He hates, if hate is not too strong a word, some Englishmen. There is a great difference between hating England and hating some Englishmen, when you are so far away that all Englishmen get blurred. It is easy in Ireland to feel that Codlin is the friend, not Short. It is not so easy to distinguish Codlin from Short, Liberal from Conservative, when they are both no more than little dots, barely visible at a distance of three thousand miles. Codlin gets mixed up with Short. Some of the original party hatred of Short attaches to Codlin, no doubt. But some of the love for Codlin, love which is the fruit of long alliance, passes to Short.

I do not mean to suggest that the sense of nationality has passed away from Ireland. It has not. In some ways the spirit of nationality is stronger in Ireland to-day than it was at any



time during the last century. It has certainly penetrated to classes which used to have no consciousness of nationality at all. There are fewer Irishmen now who are ashamed of being Irish. There are more men now than ever, in every class, who want the good of Ireland as distinguished from that of England, or of any other country. But the sense of nationality has to a very large extent passed out of Irish political life. The platform appeal of the politician to the voter in Ireland now is far oftener an appeal to Irishmen as part of the British democracy, than to Irishmen as members of a nation governed against its will by foreigners. The ideas of John O'Leary, even the ideas of Parnell, have almost vanished from Irish political life. Instead of them we have the idea of international democracy.

This change of feeling in Ireland itself will make for a modification of the position of the Irish in America. They will tend, as the older generation passes, to become more American and less Irish. This is already felt in Ireland itself. Of late years there has arisen a strong feeling against emigration. It is realised, as it used not to be, that Ireland loses those who go. The feeling is quite new. The phrase,

“ a greater Ireland beyond the seas,” is beginning to mean a little less than it did, and the general consciousness of patriotic Irishmen at home is instinctively recognising this. But it is noticeable that the dislike of emigration has not found expression among politicians. The movement is outside politics. The local political boss is frequently an emigration agent and feels no inconsistency in his position.

It would be quite easy to exaggerate the present value of the change I have tried to indicate. The old solidarity of the Irish in America remains a fact. It is to Irish friends and relatives that our emigrants go. It is among Irish people that they live when they settle in America. It is Irish people whom they marry. But the tendency is towards a breaking away from this national isolation.

The movement against emigration at home has much in it besides the instinctive protest of a nation against the loss of its people. It is in part religious, and rests on a fear that faith is more easily lost in America than in Ireland. It is in part, no doubt, the result of shrinking of sensitive and loving souls from the horror of the great sorrow of farewell.

All emotions lose their keenness with repeti-

tion. The fine rapture of a joy is never quite so delightful as it was when the joy came first and was strange. The bitterness of sorrow and disappointment gradually loses its intensity when sorrow and disappointment become familiar things. Even insults cease after a while to move us to fierce anger. The law is universal; but there are some emotions which are only very slowly dulled. The sadness which comes of watching the departure of a trainful of Irish emigrants is one of these. We are, or ought to be, well accustomed to the sight. Those of us who have lived long in the country parts of Ireland have seen these trains, and travelled a little way in them many times; but we are still saddened, hardly less saddened, than when we saw them first.

There is one day in the week on which emigrants go, and in the west of Ireland one train on that day by which they travel. It goes slowly, stopping at every station, no matter how small, and at every station there is the same scene. The platform is crowded long before the train comes in. There are many old women weeping without restraint, mothers these, or grandmothers of the boys and girls who are going. Their eyes are swollen.

Their cheeks are tear-stained. Every now and then one of them wails aloud, and the others, catching at the sound, wail with her, their voices rising and falling in a kind of weird melody, like the ancient plain-song of the Church. There are men too, but they are more silent. Very often their eyes are wet. Their lips, tightly pressed, twitch spasmodically. Occasionally an uncontrollable sob breaks from one of them. The boys and girls who are to go are helplessly sorrow-stricken. It is no longer possible for them to weep, for they have wept too much already. They are drooping despairingly. At their feet are carpet-bags and little yellow tin trunks, each bearing a great flaring steamboat label. They wear stiff new clothes; shoddy tweed suits from the shop of the village draper, dresses and blouses long discussed with some country dressmaker. These pitiful braveries mark them out unmistakably from the men in muddy frieze and the women in wide crimson petticoats, with shawls over their heads, who have come to say good-bye.

The train comes in. There is a rush to the carriage doors. Soon the windows of the carriages are filled with tear-stained faces.

Hands are stretched out, grasped, held tight. Final kisses are pressed on lips and cheeks. The guard of the train gives his signal at last. The engine whistles. A porter, mercifully brutal, by main force pushes the people back. The train moves slowly, gathers speed. For a while the crowd moves along the platform beside the train. Then a long, sad cry rises, swelling to a pitch of actual agony. Some brave soul somewhere chokes down a sob, waves his hat, and makes a pretence to cheer. Then the scene is over.

What happens next in the railway carriages? For a while there is sobbing or silence. Then wonder and the excitement of change begin to take the place of grief. Words are whispered, questions asked. Little stores of money are taken out and counted over. Steamboat tickets are examined, unfolded, folded, put in yet securer places. Already the present is something more than a dull ache; and the future is looked to as well as the past.

What happens next to the crowd which was left behind? In little groups the men and women go slowly back along the country roads to the houses left at dawn, go back to take up the work of every day. Poverty is a merciful

mistress to those whom she holds in bondage. There are fields to be dug, the cattle to be tended, the bread to be made. The steady succession of things which must be done dulls the edge of grief. They suffer less who are obliged to work as well as weep. But the sorrow remains. He has but a shallow knowledge of our people who supposes that because they go about the business of their lives afterwards as they did before there is no lasting reality in their grief. An Irish mother will say : " I had seven childer, but there's only two of them left to me now. I buried two and three is in America." She classes those who have crossed the sea with those who are dead. Both are lost to her.

Sometimes those who have gone are indeed lost utterly. There comes a letter once, and, after a long interval, another letter. Then no more letters nor any news at all. More often there is some kind of touch kept with the people at home. Letters come at Christmas time, often with very welcome gifts of money in them. There are photographs. Molly, whom we all knew when she was a bare-footed child running home from school, whom we remember as a half-grown girl climbing into her

father's cart on market-days, appears almost as a stranger in her picture. Her clothes are grand beyond our imaginings. Her face has a new look in it. There are few Irish country houses in which such photographs are not shown with a mixture of pride and grief. It is a fine thing that Molly is so grand. It is a sad thing that Molly is so strange.

Sometimes, but not very often, a boy or a girl comes home again, like a frightened child to a mother. America is too hard for some of us. These are beaten and return to the old poverty, preferring it because the ways of Irish poverty are less strenuous than the ways of American success. Sometimes, but this is rare too, a young man or woman returns, not beaten, but satisfied with moderate success. These bring with them money; the girl a marriage-portion for herself, the man enough to restock his father's farm, which he looks to inherit in the future. Sometimes older people come back to buy land, build houses, and settle down. But these are always afterwards strangers in Irish life. They never recapture the spirit of it. They have worked in America, thought in America, breathed in America, America has marked them as hers, and they

are ours no longer though they come back to us.

Often we have passing visits from those who left us. The new easiness of travelling and the comparative comfort of the journey make these visits commoner than they were. Our friends come back for two months or three. It is wonderful to see how quickly they seem to fall into the old ways. The young man, who was perhaps an insurance agent in New York, will fold away his city clothes and turn to with a loy at cutting turf. The girl, who got out of the train so fine to look at that her own father hardly dared to greet her, will be out next day in the fields making hay with her sisters and brothers.

But there is a restlessness about these visitors of ours. They want us to do new things. They find much amiss which we had not noticed. They are back with us, and glad to be back; but America is calling them all the time. There is very much that we cannot give. Soon they will go again, and any tears shed at the second parting are ours, not theirs.

There are many histories of Ireland, dealing sometimes with the whole, sometimes with this or that part of her story. They are written



with the passion of patriots, with the bitterness of enemies, with the blind fury of partisans, with the cold justice of scientific men who stand aloof. None of them are wholly satisfactory as histories of England are, or histories of America. No one can write a history of Ireland which will set forth intelligibly Ireland's place in the world. We wait for the coming of some larger-minded man who will write the history, not of Ireland, but of the Irish. In one respect it is not with us as it is with other nations. Their stories centre in their homes. Their conquerors go forth, but return again. Their thinkers live amid the scenes on which their eyes first opened. Their contributions to human knowledge are connected in all men's minds with their own lands. The statesmen of other nations rule their own people, build empires on which their own flag flies. The workmen of other nations, captains of industry or sweating labourers, make wealth in their home lands. It has never been so with us.

Our historian, when he comes and writes of us, may take as the motto of his book, Virgil's comment on the honey-making of the bees: "*Sic vos non vobis.*" Long ago we spread the

gospel of the Cross over the dark places of Europe. The monasteries of our monks, the churches of our missionary preachers were everywhere. But our own land is still the prey of that acrimonious theological bitterness which is, of all things, the most utterly opposed to the spirit of Christ. So we, but not for ourselves, made sweetness. Kant is a German. Bergson is a Frenchman. All the world knows it. Who knows or cares that John Scotus Erigena or Bishop Berkeley were Irish? The greatness of their names has shed no lustre over us. Our captains and soldiers have fought and won under every flag in Europe, and under the stars and stripes of America. Under our own flag they rarely fought and never won. Statesmen of our race have been among the governors of almost every nation under the sun. Our own land we have never governed yet. The names of Swift, of Goldsmith, of Sheridan, of a score of other men of letters, add to the glory of the record of English literature, not of ours. Our people, by their toil of mind and muscle, have made other lands rich in manufacture and commerce. Ireland remains poor.

That is why there is not, and cannot be, a history of Ireland. It is never in Ireland that

our history has been made. The threads of our story are ours—spun at home—but they are woven into splendid fabrics elsewhere, not in Ireland. But the history of the Irish people will be a great work when it is written. There will be strange chapters in it, and none stranger than those which tell of our part in the making of America. It will be a record of mingled good and evil, but it will always have in it the elements of high romance. From the middle of the eighteenth century, when the tide of emigration set westwards from Ulster, down to to-day, when, with slackening force, it flows from Connaught, those who went have always been the men and women for whom life at home seemed hopeless. There was no promise of good for them here. But in spite of the intolerable sadness of their going, in spite of the fact that at home they were beaten men, there was in them some capacity for doing things. We can succeed, it seems, elsewhere, but not here. This is the strange law which has governed our history. We recognise its force everywhere for centuries back. America gives the latest example of its working. An Irishman returns from a visit to America wondering, despairing, hoping. The wonder is in

him because he knows those who went and has seen the manner of their going. Success for them seemed impossible, yet very often they have succeeded. The despair is in him because he knows that it has been always in other lands, not in their own, that our people succeed, and because there is no power which can alter the decrees of destiny. But hope survives in him, flickering, because what our people can do elsewhere they can certainly do at home if only we can discover the solution of the malignant riddle of our failure.

THE END













